



**Audit of the  
Official Languages Program**

**November 2005**

**Foreign Affairs Canada and International Trade Canada  
Office of the Inspector General  
Audit Division (ZIV)**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	1
1.0 INTRODUCTION .....	5
2.0 AUDIT OBJECTIVES .....	7
3.0 SCOPE .....	7
4.0 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY .....	7
5.0 OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	9
5.1 Effectiveness of the official languages management framework .....	9
5.2 OLP monitoring framework .....	15
5.3 Risk relating to compliance with Part IV (service to the public) .....	16
5.4 Risk relating to compliance with Part V (language of work) .....	20
5.5 Systems reliability and data integrity .....	24
5.6 Review of certain essential functions relating to implementation of the OLP .....	27

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Official Languages Act includes three segments: service to the public, language of work and equitable participation by members of both official language communities in federal institutions. The departments of Foreign Affairs Canada (FAC) and International Trade Canada (ITCan), like all federal institutions, are required to carry out monitoring activities on their official languages program (OLP) to ensure it is managed effectively and its elements comply with the main requirements under the Act and the official languages policies of the Treasury Board (TB).

The purpose of the audit was to assess the management framework (policies, procedures and controls) pertaining to FAC/ITCan's official languages objectives, the risks associated with FAC/ITCan's compliance with Parts IV and V of the Official Languages Act and the efficiency of the management of the OLP, and the reliability of information systems used for official languages. It was also agreed that the audit findings would be used as the basis for continual monitoring of the OLP for both departments. The audit covered activities at FAC/ITCan Headquarters, more specifically those relating to the management framework. Activities involving official languages in regional offices and missions abroad were also taken into consideration.

The audit showed that FAC and ITCan are discharging their official languages commitments fairly well. However, it was noted that certain improvements to the OLP are needed, especially in terms of monitoring activities, to ensure the program fully meets all requirements connected with the Act and the TB's official languages policies.

### **Management framework**

In terms of the management framework, several deficiencies were noted. The network of official languages champions at the missions requires better follow-up to keep it up to date, while the network at Headquarters will need to be strengthened. FAC/ITCan should improve OLP planning and implementation by developing such things as a formal action plan for official languages. It was also noted that there are no annual reports informing the deputy minister of progress, deficiencies, etc. connected with official languages. This report, the content of which should differ from the content of the annual review delivered to the TB, should reflect the situation in the regional offices and at the missions. Also, the departmental official languages policy requires updating to reflect the TB's new official languages policies, as well as the key changes that have occurred in the department.

A significant portion of this audit deals with the review of OLP monitoring mechanisms and tools because of this function's major importance in the federal government's Action Plan for Official Languages (2003). It was noted that a few monitoring tools had been used by the Executive Resourcing Unit. However, monitoring activities and tools should be honed to improve the departments' ability to fulfill their

official languages obligations. A monitoring framework for the OLP was developed as a guide as part of this project.

### **Risk relating to compliance with Part IV (service to the public)**

To assess the risk relating to compliance with Part IV of the Official Languages Act (service to the public), the evaluation was limited to the capacity of the departments' management framework to provide service to the public in both official languages. The evaluation also took into account mission activities relating to service to the public.

It was noted that the bilingual capability seems adequate at several missions, but carries a risk in other locations. This finding was demonstrated in part by conducting interviews at 14 missions, by testing the active offer by telephone at 26 missions and by conducting a summary analysis of PeopleSoft data. For example, there was no active offer in both official languages at 14 of the 26 missions. Also, the PeopleSoft analysis identified 15 missions where bilingual capability is weak or doubtful. Increased monitoring activities and consideration of language needs when posting rotational employees abroad are the recommended methods for lowering the risk associated with the deficiencies identified.

### **Risk relating to compliance with Part V (language of work)**

To assess the risk associated with compliance with Part V of the Official Languages Act (language of work), the evaluation was limited to a review of the documentation and a few interviews with people in charge of personal and central services. The interviews revealed that there is significant awareness of official languages. Some representatives also demonstrated that there are a few control and monitoring activities in their organization. However, the audit revealed a certain amount of uncertainty about the bilingual capability of supervisors, as well as the bilingual capability of members of the senior executive group, nine percent (9%) of whom had not yet achieved the "CBC" level according to an internal report produced by HSD in June 2003.

No internal survey assessing employee satisfaction about language of work had been conducted since 1997. Conducting periodic surveys to measure employee satisfaction remains an essential tool for evaluating the performance and level of compliance associated with language of work. There is currently a deficiency in this regard, especially given the findings of the external survey of federal public servants conducted by the Treasury Board Secretariat (2002) for the entire public service, which contained five questions pertaining to official languages. The results for FAC/ITCan show a relatively high level of dissatisfaction for some of those questions among respondents whose first language is French.

Finally, it should be noted that the absence of a solid network of official languages representatives at Headquarters and the lack of reliability of the PeopleSoft data (see below) weakens the language of work element of the departments' OLP.

### **Systems reliability and data integrity**

The purpose was to verify the reliability of systems and the integrity of data available for decision making and follow-up in terms of official languages. According to Treasury Board (TB) requirements, the departments must take all the resources needed to ensure information systems (PeopleSoft) are reliable and data is sound.

The tests that were conducted on the data in the PeopleSoft system revealed fairly high percentages of anomalies for certain criteria, such as the kind of appointment, the expiry date of language tests, etc. These anomalies appear as inadequate values or blank fields, meaning that the value had not been entered in PeopleSoft. It is recommended, among other things, that a more comprehensive analysis be conducted on the PeopleSoft data presenting the most serious anomalies and that an action plan be devised to improve the integrity of data associated with official languages.

Finally, tests conducted on the reliability of systems and the integrity of data relating to official languages also helped verify the credibility of the data or its compliance with Treasury Board policies and directives connected with the bilingualism bonus. Generally speaking, the percentage of incumbents in rotational positions receiving the bilingualism bonus whose information in PeopleSoft does not warrant such a bonus was found to be 11% (124/1,099). This number includes incumbents of rotational positions for whom the language level achieved is below departmental policy requirements or for whom no language testing scores had been recorded in the PeopleSoft system.

### **Management Comments**

This audit report has been the subject of careful analysis. The detail, scope and the interrelationships of its recommendations will necessitate a number of remedial actions to deal with specific deficiencies. The implementation of these will contribute to a better delivery of services to both the public and our employees. It will assist in the improvement and reliability of our information systems, as well as the governance of the official languages program.

We are pleased to indicate that certain recommendations have already been implemented by HSD. We have already renewed the Officer Responsible for Official Languages network (formerly the Official Languages Champion's network) both at Headquarters and at missions, and provided them information on their duties as well as an overview of the Official Languages Program. This was also sent to the Officers

Responsible for Official Languages at the International Trade Centres. HSD has also reviewed and updated the Official Languages Directives of our two departments. The request for an annual naming of Officers Responsible for Official Languages (OROL), and the distribution of Program information to these officers will be integrated into the annual activities of HSD.

Working groups, chaired by HSD, and composed of managers from SMSH, HAM, HMO, HMA, HCD, SIV, HLD and the Geographic Area Management Offices reviewed the recommendations and developed an integrated action plan to address them and develop an appropriate implementation schedule.

HSD, apart from overseeing and monitoring the approved action plan, will annually request all bureaux, missions and regional offices to name an OROL and will provide these officers with information on their responsibilities. HSD will also regularly inform managers and employees of information on the Program, and will update departmental directives each time the Treasury Board modifies its policies. The integrated OL Action Plan is attached as an Appendix to this report.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### Specific context of official languages in the departments

Within the federal government, the Treasury Board's official languages policies and directives govern the official languages policy framework and clarify the *Official Languages Act*. Like all other federal institutions, Foreign Affairs Canada (FAC) and International Trade Canada (ITCan) are responsible for monitoring their Official Languages Program (OLP) to ensure that it is managed effectively and its various elements comply with the main requirements of the Act and the official languages policies.

FAC and ITCan Headquarters is located in the National Capital Region and is represented throughout the world by missions. ITCan also has regional offices in Canada. With employees in Canada and elsewhere, the public is served by three distinct groups of employees: (i) non-rotational staff; (ii) rotational staff; and (iii) locally engaged staff (LES). Each group is handled differently in terms of the kind of positions and the linguistic identification of those positions.

- Non-rotational employees hold positions at Headquarters in Canada. These positions are linguistically designated in a similar fashion as most public service positions.
- Rotational employees hold positions that do not have a linguistic identification, as indicated in the 2003-2004 official languages annual review. They carry out duties within various classification groups and work at Headquarters or abroad. For each group, FAC and ITCan deputy ministers determine the percentage of employees that must be bilingual and the language proficiency level needed to be considered bilingual.
- Locally engaged staff (LES) are hired by missions abroad. In general, they are nationals of the country in which the mission is located. Some have the language capability to serve Canadians in the official language of their choice.

### Organization and departmental policy

The responsibility for managing the OLP falls to the Human Resources Resourcing Unit, which is under the Strategy, Innovation and Policies Bureau (HSD).

FAC/ITCan's departmental policy on official languages presents and explains the objectives for service to the public, language of work and equitable participation that apply to the National Capital Region, embassies, high commissions, consulates abroad and regional offices in the specific case of Trade Commissioner Services.

## **Recent initiatives and issues**

During the past year, senior management identified several initiatives to boost implementation of the OLP. This includes actively promoting the OLP within FAC/ITCan through official languages champions and including statements of senior management commitments regarding official languages in their performance agreements.

However, FAC/ITCan acknowledge the continuing improvements required for the OLP and the need to establish specific monitoring guidelines to assess the Program at Headquarters, in regional offices and at missions abroad. Furthermore, FAC/ITCan are under increased pressure from politicians, the Commissioner of Official Languages and the Treasury Board to demonstrate responsible management of the OLP.

## **Recent study by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages**

The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages (OCOL) conducted a recent study on integrating linguistic duality into Canada's international relations. This study was based on 150 interviews conducted for the most part among FAC and ITCan employees, including several in a selection of nine embassies and two consulates general. The draft report, released in July 2004, contains two chapters dealing with certain elements of this official languages audit; they are "Linguistic Duality on the Front Line: Language of Service Issues" (Chapter IV) and "Internal Support for Linguistic Duality" (Chapter V). The final version of the report is expected in November 2004.

The draft report points out that much has been done to strengthen Canada's linguistic identity, but there are some major deficiencies. For example, security services were not available in both English and French in most of the locations visited. Also, the departmental official languages policy does not require an evaluation of second-language proficiency for locally engaged staff who have contact with the Canadian public. Similarly, knowledge of both or either official language is not always considered a requirement when hiring LES in the same work situation.

Also, it was observed that several senior officials who are appointed to representative positions abroad do not meet the "CBC" standard with regard to second-language proficiency. Finally, the study revealed there was a lack of efficiency in the network of official languages champions at the missions. Some champions that were met with were unsure of their duty and/or had taken little initiative in terms of official languages.



## **2.0 AUDIT OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of the audit was to assess the management framework (policies, procedures and controls) pertaining to FAC/ITCan's official languages objectives, the risks associated with FAC/ITCan's compliance with Parts IV and V of the Official Languages Act and the efficiency of the management of the OLP, and the reliability of information systems used for official languages. It was also agreed that the audit findings would be used as the basis for continual monitoring of the OLP for both departments.

## **3.0 SCOPE**

The audit examination covered the activities of both departments—FAC and ITCan—and was conducted mainly at Headquarters. A certain number of regional offices and missions abroad were also part of the audit, pursuant to the methods described in section 4.0 "Approach and methodology."

The audit examination included the following six elements:

- analysis of the management framework supporting the OLP, including the effectiveness of the organizational structure, roles and responsibilities, planning and implementation, etc.;
- the OLP monitoring framework (tools, processes);
- the risk relating to compliance with Part IV (service to the public) of the Official Languages Act and associated policies and directives;
- the risk relating to compliance with Part V (language of work) of the Official Languages Act and associated policies and directives;
- a review of the reliability of systems and the integrity of data available for decision making and follow-up;
- a review of certain essential functions connected with implementing the OLP, including the language capability of the departments as a whole, language training and the management of bilingualism bonuses.

## **4.0 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY**

This audit has been conducted using an approach based on the analysis of the inherent risks of the OLP. The purpose of this kind of analysis is to subsequently target the effort levels required and/or recommend additional audit examinations in order to conduct a comprehensive review of the high-risk deficiency at some later time.

This approach also aims to facilitate the Human Resources Resourcing Unit's implementation of a continual monitoring framework (processes, tools, etc.) for the OLP.

The approach and methodology that were used for each audit element are described below.

### **OLP management framework and monitoring framework**

The management framework was analyzed by interviewing key OLP people at Headquarters and heads of mission and by conducting a comprehensive review of the documentation associated with the processes, reports, monitoring measures, etc. surrounding the OLP.

### **Risk - Compliance with Part IV (service to the public)**

In addition to reviewing existing documentation, the risk associated with the level of compliance with Part IV of the Official Languages Act was audited by interviewing 15 heads of mission, testing the active offer at 26 missions and conducting a summary analysis of PeopleSoft data.

### **Risk - Compliance with Part V (language of work)**

This element was audited by interviewing official languages representatives for a few FAC/ITCan internal units and by conducting an exhaustive review of existing documentation (reports, surveys, statistics, etc.).

### **Systems reliability and data integrity**

To determine systems reliability and the integrity of information available for decision making and follow-up relating to the OLP, a review was conducted of the processes and practices for data authorization, the procedures for entering data into the systems and the control measures in place to determine data integrity. Tests were also conducted on a certain number of elements specific to official languages to verify the integrity and credibility of the data.

### **Functions associated with implementing the OLP**

The bilingual capability of the departments, language training and bilingualism bonuses were examined by reviewing internal documents relating to the OLP and external reports (OCOL), conducting a few tests on the data of internal systems (PeopleSoft, pay) and conducting interviews.

## **5.0 OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Effectiveness of the official languages management framework**

5.1.1 The objective was to verify the effectiveness of the official languages management framework. More specifically, the review focussed on organizational structure, communications and information processes, internal policy framework, planning and implementation, reports, and control and monitoring measures.

#### **Organizational structure**

##### **Missions**

5.1.2 The OLP includes the appointment of official languages champions at the missions; these champions are either the head of mission or someone delegated by the HOM. Telephone contact with a selection of champions from the list provided by HSD revealed that the list is outdated. Of the 14 people contacted, two said their mission was without a champion, three stated they were not the champion but knew who was, and one was uncertain about whether or not it was his responsibility. This observation confirms the results obtained by a recent (2004) study on linguistic duality by the Commissioner of Official Languages (OCOL) to the effect that some official languages champions were uncertain about their function.

5.1.3 This situation may be explained in part by the fact that the champion, when it is not the head of mission, may not have received all the necessary information. Also, the official languages information kit, which is usually sent to missions each year, was not sent in 2003. The kit required, among other things, that an official languages champion be identified and the information sent to HSD. Finally, the Post Report for Heads of Mission, which contains one page dealing with the key points pertaining to official languages, is not an adequate means on its own of ensuring that heads of mission know their responsibilities in that area at all times.

5.1.4 The presence of official languages champions at the missions is an effective way to ensure implementation of the OLP, since it enables better coordination for information distribution, reporting, monitoring, etc. However, champions must be formally identified at all times and know their responsibilities for the OLP.

##### **Headquarters**

5.1.5 Aside from a few internal units, there are no official languages champions/contact people for any of the key organizations at Headquarters. Setting up a network of official languages champions at Headquarters has already been contemplated, but no efforts have been made to create a formal, structured network. The belief is that official languages responsibility, which falls to the managers in both

departments, is sufficient for effective implementation of the OLP. However, a formal network of official languages champions/representatives would help improve official languages information/communication, planning, reporting and monitoring activities, as well as help complete the work done by HSD more effectively.

## **Regional offices**

5.1.6 Interviews with official languages representatives in the regional offices newly acquired by ITCan (December 2003) showed that Industry Canada policies were still being applied at the time of the audit. These representatives had not yet received clear official languages directives from ITCan.

## **Resources**

5.1.7 It is possible that the number of resources assigned to the OLP within the Human Resources Resourcing Unit is not adequate to successfully carry out all the activities connected with the management framework. An official languages coordinator carries out coordination, reporting, information and monitoring work on a full-time basis. The other resources devoted to official languages are done so mostly for second-language testing and by the head of the Human Resources Resourcing Unit, who devotes a third of his time to the OLP. A lack of resources could compromise the ability to implement reporting, planning, monitoring and other activities at the level required for the complexity and scope of both departments. A resource needs analysis based on full identification of activities relating to the OLP may justify adding resources and/or redefining the capabilities required.

## **Organizational restructuring**

5.1.8 The organizational restructuring caused by the formation of two departments (ITCan and FAC) has spawned significant change and a certain amount of uncertainty about organizational structure and roles and responsibilities. For example, there is currently one Official Languages Champion for both departments, but that situation could change. ITCan may also try to develop and implement its own OLP. This uncertainty will disappear once the reorganization of the two departments is completed.

## **Recommendations**

**5.1.9 Ensure there is an updated list of official languages champions at the missions and that they receive information kits every year.**

**5.1.10 Establish a network of official languages champions/representatives at Headquarters for all bureaus as well as in ITCan's newly acquired regional offices to facilitate implementation of the OLP.**

- 5.1.11 Conduct an analysis of human resources needs in HSD (number and competencies required) to effectively manage the OLP.**

#### **Management response and action plan**

- 5.1.9 This has been done for 2004. Recurring activity has been incorporated into the Official Languages action plan and a monitoring plan is being developed to ensure information remains up to date.**

- 5.1.10 See reply to 5.1.9**

- 5.1.11 This has been addressed by the Strategy, Innovation and Policies Bureau (HSD) as a part of the development of the official languages action plan.**

#### **Communications and information**

- 5.1.12 Two information guides were recently developed to inform employees and managers about their rights and responsibilities. The guides—one dealing with language of work and the other with service to the public—have already been distributed to employees. Since TB policy on official languages stipulates that basic responsibility for implementing each institution’s OLP rests with senior management, it would be appropriate to remind senior executives of these responsibilities by distributing these guides.**

#### **Recommendation**

- 5.1.13 Remind managers of the departments of their official languages responsibilities by sending out the existing guides for service to the public and language of work.**

#### **Management response and action plan**

- 5.1.13 HSD will examine the best methods of doing this and will remind managers of their responsibilities on an annual basis.**

#### **Planning and implementation**

- 5.1.14 The review of work documents produced by the Human Resources Resourcing Unit and the annual reviews show solid intent to properly plan activities to be undertaken within the departments’ OLP. The main references to planning and/or a formal action plan are as follows:**

- The document “Official Languages: An Overview 2001-2002” gives the history of official languages for both departments beginning in the 1970s and provides an in-depth analysis of the main weaknesses and current issues, including the inadequate bilingual capability of certain groups of rotational employees.
- The draft action plans for the OLP submitted by HSD for 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 identify the current key problems and actions to be taken.

5.1.15 Recent action plans have not, however, made it past the “draft” stage and are not as comprehensive as the “Overview 2001-2002” document. Furthermore, they have not been submitted to Treasury Board as communicated in the recent annual reviews and raised in the responses to the reviews.

5.1.16 There is currently no official languages action plan for the missions. Only one of the 15 missions asked during this audit demonstrated knowledge of current deficiencies and the existence of an action plan to resolve them. Although official languages action plans in missions or geographic regions are not required under departmental policy, they confirm identification of official languages objectives, strengths and weaknesses and the presence of concrete actions to maintain or improve implementation of the OLP. On this point, the recent OCOL study (2004) contains a recommendation that all missions should identify their language objectives. In the case of personal and central services that were contacted, most revealed the existence of a more or less formal action plan for official languages.

5.1.17 On a positive note, the Human Resources Resourcing Unit filed a submission to the Innovation Fund (Action Plan for Official Languages - 2003) for the development of the following tools: 1) preparation of an official languages quick reference tool for locally engaged staff; and 2) analysis of language requirements for rotational employees. Although the request was refused, it shows a willingness to implement concrete actions to improve the OLP.

5.1.18 The current status of OLP planning and implementation shows there are at this time no assurances that regular follow-up is being conducted on all major deficiencies previously identified by HSD (language capability, etc.) and by internal and external audits, and that proposed actions are being solidly implemented. The presence of a formal official languages action plan within the two departments is an important tool for effective implementation of the OLP.

## Recommendations

- 5.1.19 Develop a formal action plan that will include all OLP deficiencies identified through HSD analyses and internal and external audits, and allocate the necessary resources to ensure its implementation.**

- 5.1.20**        **Ensure that missions, organizations at Headquarters and regional offices have an official languages action plan to meet their objectives and correct the deficiencies identified, if applicable.**
- 5.1.21**        **Monitor implementation of the action plan for each department and issue progress reports for them.**

#### **Management response and action plan**

- 5.1.19**        **Weaknesses identified in the audit have been addressed through the development of the action plan that will be approved by the deputy ministers.**
- 5.1.20**        **An OL Action Plan Template was developed and sent to missions, HQ and regional offices in March 2005.**
- 5.1.21**        **HSD, assisted by the Monitoring and Reporting Working Group will establish a process to ensure that implementation of the action plan can be regularly reviewed and reported upon.**

#### **Reports**

**5.1.22**        There is no internal reporting structure for official languages. Only preparation of the annual review submitted to TB provides a certain form of reporting. Departmental policy, however, provides for the drafting of internal reports to the deputy minister for the OLP as a distinct activity from that connected with the preparation of the annual review.

**5.1.23**        The annual review contains observations flowing from monitoring tests carried out by the OL coordinator and from information compiled by sending questionnaires to all assistant deputy ministers so their respective organizations could communicate progress made and upcoming issues. However, since 2000, missions are no longer contacted about the review because they report directly to the assistant deputy ministers responsible for the geographic regions.

#### **Causes and impacts**

**5.1.24**        The absence of formal internal reports decreases the ability to make a complete and accurate finding on implementation of the OLP, including monitoring activities conducted (see below), bona fide issues, complaints reported, etc.

## **Recommendations**

- 5.1.25**      **Develop an annual report to the deputy minister, which should take into account all the issues, deficiencies and progress identified in the OLP.**
- 5.1.26**      **Implement an approach enabling missions and regional offices to provide information related to their OLP, in order to include it in the annual report.**

## **Management response and action plan**

- 5.1.25**      **An annual official languages report will be submitted to the deputy ministers.**
- 5.1.26**      **A reporting template has been developed for use by the missions and regional offices and is ready for implementation.**

## **Departmental policy on official languages**

5.1.27      There is a departmental policy on official languages that dates back several years. It fulfilled all TB policies/requirements while addressing the very specific context of the former Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) (rotational employees, non-rotational employees, locally engaged staff, etc.).

5.1.28      However, the policy now needs to be significantly updated to take into account requirements connected with new TB policies, the addition of regional services, the splitting of DFAIT into two departments and references to outdated documents (e.g. memorandums of understanding) and outdated target dates. This policy update was also recommended in the recent OCOL study (2004).

## **Recommendation**

- 5.1.29**      **Update the departmental policy on official languages to take into account new TB policies and key changes that have taken place in the department.**

## **Management response and action plan**

- 5.1.29**      **HSD has updated the current departmental official languages directives and will modify these, as necessary, as the Treasury Board policies are changed.**



## **5.2 OLP monitoring framework**

5.2.1 The Action Plan for Official Languages (2003) reiterates the requirement for continual monitoring of Parts IV (service to the public), V (language of work) and VI (equitable participation). This is why a significant portion of this audit deals with the review of OLP monitoring mechanisms and tools.

### **Performance management agreements**

5.2.2 The departments use performance management agreements for members of the executive group. These agreements include a list of ongoing commitments and key commitments to which performance measurement criteria are linked for each performance management cycle. The most recent official languages annual reviews mention that these agreements include commitments relating to official languages responsibilities. A summary review of existing agreements as part of this audit, however, revealed that such commitments are not always included. Since the specific content of agreements is left to the discretion of supervisors, criteria relating to official languages may not be systematically taken into account.

### **Monitoring processes and tools**

5.2.3 Several control and monitoring activities and tests have been and are conducted periodically by the Human Resources Resourcing Unit. These include such things as tests on PeopleSoft (language capability for rotational and non-rotational employees, identification of bilingual positions, etc.), surveys to measure employee satisfaction and a test of PeopleSoft reliability.

5.2.4 The audit made it possible to use and identify additional monitoring tools that could be used by the Human Resources Resourcing Unit, including two tools used with the missions as part of this audit (test of the active offer by telephone and the questionnaire to the heads of mission). Another worthwhile tool for monitoring missions would be the questionnaire used by the OCOL in its investigation at DFAIT in 1995, which asks for a number of very specific data items involving the capacity to provide service to the public in both official languages.

5.2.5 The results of monitoring tools/activities are not officially reported in the departments, though, and several of these tools remain incomplete or unused over a long period. However, a monitoring framework was developed in the past by the Human Resources Resourcing Unit. This framework identified the anticipated results, performance indicators, risk analysis and measurement tools for several official languages requirements, but it has not been continually used in its entirety. This monitoring framework is the pre-requisite for operating a formal monitoring program because it allows for continual reporting of monitoring-related results for all OLP monitoring tools and processes.

## **Missions**

5.2.6 Missions are the most risky units for the OLP because of the nature of their role. However, it is at the missions that FAC/ITCan has the least amount of control over and information on language capability (lack of reporting, limited monitoring, heads of mission not always advised of their role, locally engaged staff, etc.).

## **Causes and impacts**

5.2.7 The absence of formal departmental action plans for official languages and the lack of resources may explain the weaknesses identified for control and monitoring tools. An action plan would identify which key elements to monitor within the OLP. Incomplete monitoring tools prevent the departments from verifying whether or not official languages objectives have been achieved and requirements met.

## **Recommendations**

**5.2.8 Periodically verify a sampling of performance management agreements to ensure that official languages obligations are taken into consideration.**

**5.2.9 Refine monitoring measures and tools to improve the departments' ability to discharge their official languages obligations, especially at the missions, beginning with the use of the partial monitoring framework presented in Appendix C.**

## **Management response and action plan**

**5.2.8 A monitoring plan will be developed by October 30, 2005. The plan will be implemented with existing resources and will include as a minimum the monitoring recommendations reflected in this audit report.**

**5.2.9 See reply to 5.2.8**

## **5.3 Risk relating to compliance with Part IV (service to the public)**

5.3.1 To assess the risk relating to compliance with Part IV of the *Official Languages Act* (service to the public), the evaluation was limited to the capacity of the departments' management framework to provide service to the public in both official languages. This capacity was assessed through tests on the PeopleSoft system, interviews with official languages champions at the missions, a review of existing documentation and a test of the active offer at selected missions. It was also agreed to audit missions only, thereby excluding service to the public at Headquarters.

## Findings

5.3.2 It is noted that the bilingual capability seems adequate at several missions, but carries a risk in other locations. This finding was demonstrated in part by conducting interviews at 14 missions, by testing the active offer by telephone at 26 missions and by conducting a summary analysis of PeopleSoft data. Also, as discussed in the previous section, the absence of reports from the missions increases uncertainty about bilingual capability.

### Interviews with official languages champions at the missions

5.3.3 Aside from the few uncertainties regarding the champion's role, discussed in section 5.1, the results of the interviews show that:

- most of the champions recognize the importance of service to the public in both official languages and asserted that they take adequate steps in this regard, including administrative arrangements;
- at nine of the 14 missions, language training is offered to locally engaged staff only; it is not offered to rotational employees or their spouses, except in Beijing;
- all missions except Accra assert they are able to provide service in both official languages but few of the missions have implemented measures or controls to ensure it is happening;
- Beijing stands out because of its more proactive official languages action, such as bilingual meetings, annual plans, annual inspections, and retention courses provided to rotational employees.

### Testing the active offer

5.3.4 The test of the active offer yielded the following results:

- all answering machines except one (Port of Spain) make an active offer of service in both official languages;
- 12 out of 26 receptionists made an active offer in both official languages;
- 14 out of 26 receptionists made an active offer in only one of the two official languages;
- of the 12 receptionists who made an active offer in English only, two (Barbados and London) continued the conversation in French once they became aware of the language of preference;
- five missions were more problematic: Dakar, Kingston, New Delhi, Port of Spain and Pretoria. In these missions, it was very difficult to obtain service in the language of choice, and impossible in the case of Kingston and Port of Spain;
- the response capability after the call was transferred was acceptable or excellent in the five cases where it was needed, while greeting messages on answering machines for transferred calls were sometimes bilingual (three instances:

Amman, Hong Kong and Washington) and sometimes unilingual (two instances: New Delhi and Seoul).

**PeopleSoft analysis**

5.3.5 The summary analysis of the bilingual capability of rotational employees at the missions, which was conducted using PeopleSoft data, shows capability is weak or doubtful at 15 missions. As illustrated in the table on the next page, the weakest bilingual capabilities for missions with five rotational employees or more occur in Accra (three out of six), Amman (three out of six), Athens (three out of eight), Islamabad (three out of eight), London (12 out of 26), Port of Spain (three out of six), Singapore (three out of nine) and Tel Aviv (five out of 10). There are also several missions with a limited number of staff (four rotational employees or fewer) that have no bilingual employees or only one.

**Table 1: Bilingual capability of rotational employees according to the PeopleSoft system**

	Mission Code	Bilingual Employees	Unilingual Employees	Total Number
Accra	ACCRA	3	3	6
Amman	AMMAN	3	3	6
Athens	ATHNS	3	5	8
Bandar Seri Begawan	BSBGN	0	1	1
Denver	DENVR	0	1	1
Islamabad	ISBAD	3	5	8
Lagos	LAGOS	1	2	3
London	LDN	12	14	26
Minneapolis	MNPLS	1	2	3
Port of Spain	PSPAN	3	3	6
Seattle	SEATL	1	2	3
San Francisco	SFRAN	0	1	1
Singapore	SPORE	3	6	9
Tel Aviv	TAVIV	5	5	10
Zagreb	ZAGRB	0	2	2

**Regional offices**

5.3.6 ITCan’s regional offices, newly transferred from Industry Canada, are slightly familiar with the department’s OLP (requirements, roles and responsibilities, etc.). These offices should be assessed in connection with the department’s internal OL policy.

## **Control and monitoring**

5.3.7 Although a brochure had been developed to remind managers and employees of their official languages-service to the public obligations and requirements, there are no internal control mechanisms to ensure service is always provided in both official languages (testing of active offer, bilingual capability by internal service, etc.), either at the missions or at Headquarters. There are also no mechanisms for evaluating customer satisfaction for service to the public.

## **Recommendations**

**5.3.8 Establish monitoring activities for service to the public at the missions, and to a lesser extent at Headquarters (testing of active offer, PeopleSoft analysis, etc.), to ensure adequate implementation of the OLP. These measures should include the following components:**

- ▶ the study and determination of the composition of the public for points of service (regional offices only);
- ▶ the review of the bilingual capability in points of service to the public using PeopleSoft data;
- ▶ the use of customer satisfaction assessment mechanisms;
- ▶ testing of the active offer by telephone, especially at the missions;
- ▶ verification of the active offer other than by telephone (reception areas, signage, customer service in person, public messages, etc.);
- ▶ communications to the public (equal presence and quality of French and English);
- ▶ the study of the use of both official languages on computer networks.

**5.3.9 Ensure that the units responsible for posting rotational employees abroad take official languages needs into consideration when assigning those employees.**

**5.3.10 Evaluate the status of regional offices with regard to the departmental official languages policy (language designation, requirements, etc.).**

## **Management response and action plan**

**5.3.8 See reply to 5.2.8**

**5.3.9 For the 2006 assignment cycle, HMA and HCD will include OL requirements in the assignment process.**

**5.3.10 Evaluation of the status of regional offices will be included in the monitoring plan noted in 5.2.8.**

**5.4 Risk relating to compliance with Part V (language of work)**

5.4.1 For the language of work segment, the scope of the mandate allowed the risk associated with compliance with Part V (language of work) to be assessed, but did not allow a complete compliance audit to be conducted. To verify compliance for language of work, conducting an opinion survey among employees is virtually indispensable. The survey could not be conducted within the framework of a project of limited scope such as this one. Another key tool consists in conducting tests based on PeopleSoft data to determine the language capability of internal services and supervisors. As discussed in the next section, the problem associated with the data's lack of reliability must first be resolved before comprehensive analyses can be conducted.

**Findings**

**Current status**

5.4.2 Interviews with official languages representatives for the six internal services selected where the representative returned our call revealed that there is significant awareness of official languages. Some representatives also demonstrated that there are a few control and monitoring activities in their organization. However, as demonstrated in section 2 of this document, the absence of a solid network of official languages representatives at Headquarters weakens the OLP for the language of work component. Although responsibility for implementing the OLP falls to the managers, the appointment of official languages representatives for key internal organizations or groups of organizations would help facilitate information exchanges, planning, monitoring activities and the report production process.

5.4.3 Of all the internal HSD documents reviewed during this audit, the document "Official Languages: An Overview 2001-2002" is the most complete and the most critical of the language of work component. It states that:

- it is difficult to conduct monitoring without reviewing internal complaints or conducting internal surveys based on employee satisfaction regarding services;
- certain departmental work tools and certain meetings are not in both official languages;
- training and development courses for employees are not always offered in the employees' language of choice.

The internal document review and the interviews did not show that follow-up on these elements had been conducted.

5.4.4 Interviews with official languages champions at the missions provided little information on the language of work issue. Most indicated that automated systems and regularly and widely used work tools/computer tools are provided in the employees' language of choice. Departmental policy indicates that language of work at the missions is either English, French or both in terms of other duties or other activities, taking into consideration each mission's specific circumstances.

## **Supervision**

5.4.5 Certain recent HSD documents indicate serious deficiencies in terms of supervision. The 2003-2004 draft action plan mentions that in 2002-2003, 24.5% of non-rotational supervisors apparently did not meet the language requirements of their position. The actual rate may be higher or lower, though, because of the lack of reliability of the data in the PeopleSoft system (section 5.5). Furthermore, TB's response to the 2002-2003 review asks that the department ensure administrative measures are taken so employees can assert their language of work rights when their supervisors are not bilingual.

5.4.6 There is no specific objective for the percentage of supervisors that should have the language capability required by their position in the two departments. Once the PeopleSoft data is more reliable, existing monitoring measures should be better targeted to identify the areas where the largest discrepancies exist. Furthermore, the "AAA" language level attached to certain supervisor positions and non-imperative staffing may no longer be adequate to ensure effective implementation of the OLP.

## **Members of the senior management group**

5.4.7 The issue of the language level of members of senior management (executives) remains a challenge in both departments. The commitment made in the last memorandum of understanding and in certain other internal documents to the effect that 100% of senior management group members would meet the "CBC" level had not yet been realized.

5.4.8 An internal report produced by HSD (June 2003) states that 9% of the members of this group (32 individuals) had not yet attained the "CBC" level. What is most worrisome is that 16 of them were not taking or about to take language training courses because of their overseas posting. In the 2001-2002 annual review, the former DFAIT made the commitment that all executives returning from post in the future who had not yet attained the "CBC" level would be required to achieve it during their period in Canada before beginning any new posting. The linguistic status for executives in both departments hinders the attainment of official languages objectives and leaves external agencies (TB, OCOL) and subordinate employees with a poor impression of where official languages rank in terms of priorities.

## **Personal and central services**

5.4.9 The bilingual capability of personal and central services could only be partially audited because of the limited number of services for which an official languages representative had been identified and because there is no formal network of official languages champions at Headquarters. Such a network would enable coverage of a larger portion of the departments for official languages activities/responsibilities.

5.4.10 Nevertheless, interviews with official languages representatives who were contacted revealed that these representatives were discharging their responsibilities well. However, only an analysis of the bilingual capability of each service using the PeopleSoft data can confirm the level of compliance and/or support the results of the interviews.

## **Internal surveys**

5.4.11 The findings of the 2002 survey of federal public servants conducted by the Treasury Board Secretariat for the entire public service contained five questions pertaining to official languages. The results for FAC/ITCan shows a moderate satisfaction rate for some of those questions among respondents whose first language is French. For example, 34% of those respondents somewhat disagreed or strongly disagreed that they felt free to draft documents, including e-mails, in the official language of their choice. The dissatisfaction rate regarding the use of the language of choice during work unit meetings or meetings with the immediate supervisor was in the order of 33% and 22% respectively.

5.4.12 No internal survey assessing employee satisfaction about language of work had been conducted since 1997. Another such internal survey was also conducted in 1994. Conducting periodic surveys to measure employee satisfaction remains an essential tool for evaluating the performance and level of compliance associated with language of work. There is currently a deficiency in this regard, especially given the findings of the external survey conducted by the Treasury Board Secretariat (2002).

## **Recommendations**

**5.4.13 Establish monitoring activities for language of work, particularly at Headquarters, to ensure adequate implementation of the OLP and the level of compliance for the language of work segment. These measures should include the following components:**

- ▶ **periodic surveys of employees to verify the satisfaction level regarding official languages - language of work segment;**
- ▶ **a full analysis of the language capability of supervisors once the reliability level of the PeopleSoft data has been improved;**



- ▶ a full analysis of the bilingual capability of internal services once the reliability level of the PeopleSoft data has been improved;
- ▶ periodic and frequent follow-up on the linguistic status (training courses, etc.) of senior management members (executives);
- ▶ formal and documented follow-up of complaints forwarded internally or by the OCOL;
- ▶ periodic analyses to verify that training and development courses for employees are always offered in the language of choice.

**5.4.14** Take the necessary steps to ensure that all senior management members (executives) attain the “CBC” language level as soon as possible.

**5.4.15** Establish a clear objective regarding the portion of supervisors who should meet the language requirements of their positions and review the minimum language capability required (AAA vs. CBC vs. other?) as well as the staffing process (imperative vs. non-imperative) for supervisors.

#### **Management response and action plan**

**5.4.13** See reply to 5.2.8

**5.4.14** Immediately upon appointment or return from abroad, non-imperative appointees and non-bilingual EX’s will be required to take language training.

**5.4.15** It should be noted that with respect to supervisory staff in linguistically identified positions (non-rotationals), there is no “percentage” that is required to be bilingual. In those areas of the country that are bilingual for language of work, a supervisor must be bilingual so his/her employees can fully exercise their language of work rights.

**HSD will inform HR Operations of OLEAO provisions. HMO and managers will also review the linguistic designation of all supervisory positions with requirements of AAA.**

#### **5.5 Systems reliability and data integrity**

**5.5.1** The purpose was to verify the reliability of systems and the integrity of data available for decision making and follow-up in terms of official languages. According to Treasury Board (TB) requirements, the departments must take all the

resources needed to ensure information systems (PeopleSoft) are reliable and data is sound.

5.5.2 Tests on the reliability of information systems used for official languages and on the integrity of the information available for decision making and follow-up were conducted. In doing so, the human resources system, PeopleSoft, was the main consideration. A review of reports and other internal documents relating to the OLP also helped elicit some information regarding data reliability.

## Findings

5.5.3 To conduct testing on systems reliability and data integrity, we carried out two tests: the first on criteria that apply to all positions in both departments; the second on just the bilingual positions. Overall, eight information elements or codes specific to official languages were identified. Then for each of those elements we evaluated the values attributed or the absence of those values for both non-rotational and rotational positions. Based on how the data was compiled, we looked at approximately 90% of the departments' positions.

5.5.4 The findings of the verified information elements are presented below. However, so as not to weigh down the text that follows, results reported according to non-rotational and rotational positions for criteria applicable to all positions and for criteria applicable to bilingual positions are presented in Appendix "A."

Criteria applicable to all positions:

- a. First official language: the letters attributed to this element indicate the employee's first official language. Out of 3,820 files reviewed, we noted 84 anomalies (2.22%). Anomalies are inadequate values, such as in one instance the value "U" was attributed, whereas only the values "E" for English and "F" for French are acceptable. Or the required values simply do not appear in PeopleSoft.
- b. Language requirements of the position: this element indicates the official language(s) required to carry out the duties of the position. We noted 136 situations, or 3.6% of positions, where no language requirement is indicated.
- c. Kind of appointment: the codes used indicate whether or not the appointment is to a bilingual position, if yes, whether or not it is imperative, or to a rotational position, etc. We noted 1,082 instances, or 28.3% of positions, where no indication appeared in the system.

Criteria applicable to bilingual positions:

- a. Language profile of the position: this code identifies the position's profile for the two official languages required to carry out the duties of a position. Of the 2,154 bilingual positions looked at, we noted 93 of them (4.3%) where PeopleSoft does not show a language profile.
- b. Date of language testing scores: verification of this element focussed only on the scores of the oral exam of incumbents of bilingual positions receiving the bilingualism bonus. Of the 2,154 positions reviewed, we noted 155 instances, or 7.2% of positions, where no value appears in PeopleSoft.
- c. Language testing scores (oral expression only): in a similar manner to the preceding element, we reviewed 2,154 bilingual positions. We noted 190 anomalies (8.8%). The values were inadequate, i.e. an X, or simply do not appear in PeopleSoft.
- d. Expiry date of language testing scores: of the 2,157 data items reviewed, we noted 217 situations, or 10.1%, where no date is mentioned.
- e. Linguistic status of incumbent: element indicating the linguistic status of the incumbent of a position where the bilingualism bonus is being received. Of the 995 non-rotational positions studied, we noted 61 anomalies. The anomalies cover bilingual positions (31 positions), unilingual English positions (19 positions), unilingual French positions (1) and either/or and other positions (11) for which there is no mention of the linguistic status of the position's incumbent. In the case of rotational positions, this situation prevails in 98.3% of cases (1,139 positions out of 1,159). Most rotational positions require the use of either English or French.

5.5.5 Aside from the tests conducted as part of this audit, we found several references pertaining to the lack of reliability and accuracy of PeopleSoft data in the official languages annual reviews submitted to the Treasury Board, in work documents drafted by the Human Resources Policy and Strategic Planning Division (HSD) and in a few studies conducted by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages (OCOL).

5.5.6 In addition to pointing out the problem several times in recent years, the official languages coordinator also conducted a test on PeopleSoft, which showed the lack of reliability of PeopleSoft data.

## **Causes and impacts**

5.5.7 According to the 2001-2002 official languages annual review, the problem of the lack of data reliability apparently grew with the installation of PeopleSoft 8 in early 2002. In recent years, Corporate Services (SMD) and Human Resources have not

always coordinated their priorities in terms of managing and using PeopleSoft. However, measures recently put in place should improve communication between these two bodies and facilitate harmonization of their priorities. These measures took shape when two employees were appointed to handle the coordination of activities associated with data quality between the corporate services of human resources and managers.

5.5.8 Creating groups of “rotational” employees within the department caused the generalization of the entry of certain data and partially explains the current situation. On occasion, the details specific to each position and the status of their incumbent has not been recorded in the system, taking for granted that the characteristics of the group apply to all positions in the group as well as to their incumbents. A lack of training may explain this deficiency. It was reported that the many staff changes that occurred within the department had created a delay in entering the data into the PeopleSoft system. It has proven difficult to make up this lag in a timely manner, and the haste in doing so apparently led to inaccuracies in the system, some of which still exist.

5.5.9 The lack of integrity of the PeopleSoft data leads to uncertainty in FAC/ITCan’s ability to effectively meet official languages requirements, particularly for the bilingual capability of supervisors, service to the public and the departments’ internal services. The availability of reliable quantitative data to verify bilingual capability is essential for implementing an adequate monitoring system and effectively managing the OLP.

## **Recommendations**

- 5.5.10 Conduct a more in-depth study of the PeopleSoft data that presents anomalies in terms of official languages by referring to the source documents of the transactions.**
- 5.5.11 Draft an action plan for improving the integrity of official languages data, including data accuracy and the entry of data in a timely manner into the PeopleSoft system, as well as the roles and responsibilities of the main stakeholders and the required time lines.**
- 5.5.12 Ensure employees responsible for entering data into PeopleSoft receive adequate training.**
- 5.5.13 Periodically conduct tests on PeopleSoft data to verify its completeness and take the appropriate corrective measures.**

## **Management response and action plan**

- 5.5.10 In the case of PeopleSoft, data integrity questions were mentioned as a major contributor to apparent weaknesses in this audit . This is**

**also being addressed by the PS Business Process Review and the On-Line Pay Readiness Study. The latter studies should be the lead to correct erroneous data and ensure that all new entries are fully compliant with requirements.**

**5.5.11 See reply to 5.5.10**

**5.5.12 See reply to 5.5.10**

**5.5.13 See reply to 5.5.10**

## **5.6 Review of certain essential functions relating to implementation of the OLP**

### **Bilingualism bonuses**

5.6.1 The tests conducted on the reliability of systems and the integrity of data relating to official languages (see section 5.1) also helped verify the credibility of the data or its compliance with Treasury Board policies and directives connected with the bilingualism bonus.

5.6.2 First, the PeopleSoft data relating to the bilingualism bonus was validated with data from the pay system for all employees of the departments. To determine compliance with a select number of Treasury Board policies and directives dealing with the bilingualism bonus, seven tests were conducted based on the PeopleSoft data.

5.6.3 The findings of the verified information elements are presented below. However, so as not to weigh down the text that follows, results reported according to non-rotational and rotational positions are presented in Appendix “B.”

5.6.4 Note that the data contained in PeopleSoft was not corroborated by source documents. That exercise was not part of this mandate. Several cases reported below may simply be a reflection of the lack of integrity of the PeopleSoft data.

- a. Positions in the EX category: these positions require a high level of bilingualism and knowledge of both official languages is mandatory. Incumbents of these positions are therefore not supposed to receive the bilingualism bonus. However, we noted 20 cases where incumbents of these positions are apparently receiving the bilingualism bonus.

Incumbents whose substantive position is in the EX category: since it is possible for an incumbent of an EX category position to temporarily hold a position in another category—e.g. a position in the FS 02 category—we looked to see how PeopleSoft would handle such a case. We found one case where the incumbent

whose substantive position is in the EX category is receiving the bilingualism bonus.

- b. Positions whose language requirements are other than bilingual (English essential, French essential, or either English or French essential) and whose incumbents are receiving the bilingualism bonus according to pay documents. According to Treasury Board directives, only incumbents of bilingual positions should receive the bilingualism bonus.

Among non-rotational positions, we noted 74 situations where the positions require the use of only one language and the incumbents were receiving the bilingualism bonus. Of these, (a) 25 positions apparently require English only; (b) one position French only; (c) 11 positions either English or French; and (d) 37 other positions give no indication of the language requirements of the positions.

There are approximately 1,124 rotational positions for which the language requirement of the position calls for the use of either English or French and 1,074 positions for which the incumbents are receiving the bilingualism bonus. Payment of the bilingualism bonus to rotational employees is based on Treasury Board directives dating back to 1978 and interpretations issued in subsequent years. These provisions were not rolled over into the most recent versions of the Treasury Board's official languages directives.

- c. Language testing scores (oral expression) showing an "A," where the incumbents hold bilingual positions and are receiving the bilingualism bonus according to pay documents. Since 1978, the Treasury Board has been requiring the departments to gradually eliminate these positions. We noted 22 positions whose language testing scores for oral expression show an "A."
- d. Expiry date of language testing scores (oral expression) of incumbents of bilingual positions prior to 1990 or not appearing in PeopleSoft: we noted 134 such situations out of 2,157 bilingual positions.
- e. Incumbents not meeting the language requirements of their position who are apparently receiving the bilingualism bonus anyhow according to pay documents. We noted 17 such cases. However, in five cases, PeopleSoft is apparently not up to date because the system indicates that the incumbents are exempt from language testing.
- f. Finally, we compared the PeopleSoft data relating to the code indicating delivery of the bilingualism bonus with the pay documents reporting the payment of the bilingualism bonus. Our study revealed that 76 employees were not receiving the bonus while PeopleSoft was showing a positive value (3.52%).

5.6.5 Other tests were conducted to verify compliance with departmental policies and directives relating to the bilingualism bonus for rotational positions only depending on whether the incumbents had been taken on strength before or after 1987. Incumbents of rotational positions had to obtain level “B” for written comprehension, written expression and oral interaction prior to 1987. Since 1987, these requirements have been increased to level “C.”

5.6.6 Generally speaking, the percentage of incumbents in rotational positions receiving the bilingualism bonus whose information in PeopleSoft does not warrant such a bonus was found to be 11% (124/1,099). This number includes incumbents of rotational positions for whom the language level achieved is below departmental policy requirements or for whom no language testing scores had been recorded in the PeopleSoft system.

### **Causes and impacts**

5.6.7 The high number of employees in both departments who are receiving a bilingualism bonus while their function or position apparently does not permit it, according to the PeopleSoft data, is caused by (a) the problem associated with the lack of integrity of the data described above; (b) a lack of coordination and communications mechanisms between HSD and the pay unit; (c) a lack of monitoring of the OLP; and (d) a lack of clarification as to the application of Treasury Board policies.

5.6.8 According to departmental policy, incumbents of rotational positions that require the use of both official languages are eligible for the bilingualism bonus. The bonus is given to them on the condition that they meet the language requirements established for their group and level based on the scores received during the Second Language Evaluation.

5.6.9 This policy is based on a Treasury Board circular dated 1978 which stipulated that departments conducting operations abroad were not required, among other things, to identify the language requirements of the positions to which employees were posted. This directive was discontinued when the Treasury Board introduced its Manual on Official Languages. The provisions of the Circular were reaffirmed in 1994.

5.6.10 However, the lack of follow-up and rigour associated with data involving employees' linguistic status and their positions and the absence of recent departmental interpretation following numerous changes made by the Treasury Board regarding the payment of the bilingualism bonus lead us to believe that confusion currently exists within the departments as to the provisions relating to language identification of rotational positions, information to be recorded in the PeopleSoft system on the incumbents of these positions and the impact of these conditions on the payment of the bilingualism bonus.

## **Recommendations**

- 5.6.11** Review supporting documentation justifying the payment of the bilingualism bonus to department employees where anomalies have been detected, so as to eliminate all payments that may be inappropriate.
- 5.6.12** Obtain confirmation from the Treasury Board about the ongoing application of special provisions granted to the departments in 1978 regarding rotational positions at missions abroad, i.e. those which pertain to:
- ▶ determining official languages obligations;
  - ▶ identifying positions' language requirements;
  - ▶ staffing positions or functions at post according to language requirements; and
  - ▶ paying the bonus to incumbents of positions based on the provisions that will have been approved.

## **Management response and action plan**

- 5.6.11** Corrective action will be taken to address any payments to non-eligible employees and departmental bilingual bonus procedures will also be developed.
- 5.6.12** HSD has already contacted the Public Service Human Resources Management with respect to special arrangements for the rotational foreign service. HSD is responsible for ensuring that there is concordance between the policies of the Central Agencies and those of the departments with respect to the Program.

## **Language training**

- 5.6.13** Generally speaking, the audit showed that, apart from the uncertainty regarding the availability of language training for locally engaged staff, there are no major deficiencies in the case of other employees of the departments. For example, distance training is available.
- 5.6.14** Non-rotational employees receive language training from the Public Service Commission. However, a priority list had to be established because of the long waiting period (2005). This training is mostly geared towards non-imperative staffing.
- 5.6.15** The Foreign Service Institute provides language training to rotational employees for the FS and MCO levels. All candidates for these two groups who are



posted abroad must obtain the “CCC” rating in the second language before being posted.

5.6.16 The 2003-2004 annual review states that a full analysis of language training needs had been conducted and, consequently, certain priorities had been established to ensure the effectiveness of the training. The same review reveals that some sectors took the initiative of providing official languages development training to some of their employees to allow for learning retention. One out of six internal services contacted as part of this audit follow such a practice.

5.6.17 For locally engaged staff (LES), departmental policy stipulates that some of them must be able to provide service in both official languages upon hiring, or receive language training courses as soon as they are called upon to have contact with the public. Also, the OCOL’s recent study (2004) shows that funds allocated to missions by Headquarters for LES language training are insufficient for achieving bilingualism-related objectives. With the growing number of LES at the missions, the situation may further weaken their ability to respond to the public at all times in both official languages.

### **Recommendation**

**5.6.18 Ensure that the missions provide the required language training to LES once they are called upon to have contact with the public and therefore must have knowledge of both official languages at all times.**

### **Management response and action plan**

**5.6.18 HLD, assisted by the working group, will ensure that action is taken to ensure that the public is continuously served in its preferred official language. HSD has reminded Heads of Missions of their responsibilities to ensure the availability of services to the public in both official languages. Cards with expressions in both official languages have been distributed to receptionists and security guards.**

### **Language capability of the departments**

5.6.19 The audit showed that there is a pressing need for systematic re-evaluation of language capability needs and objectives for both departments, including linguistic designation of positions if deemed appropriate. This had been raised in the internal document “Overview 2001-2002,” more specifically for rotational employees. The former DFAIT set itself specific objectives for the language capability of various groups (FS, CS, CR, etc.) of rotational employees in the early 1990s and it was

unknown in 2001-2002 if those objectives had been achieved and/or if they were still realistic.

5.6.20 It was noted that the 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 official languages annual reviews contain many statistics on the departments' language capability. However, the density of the information, the lack of clear objectives based on strengths and weaknesses and the lack of reliability of PeopleSoft data (see section 5.1) make it difficult to make a sound assessment of the true language capability of the departments. In that regard, in its response to the 2002-2003 review, the TB requests data of better quality on employees' language capability.

5.6.21 In the case of non-rotational employees, the data shows a definite deterioration of the language capability in recent years. The proportion of employees who meet the requirements of their positions, setting aside the lack of reliability of PeopleSoft data, totalled more than 90% in the "Overview 2001-2002" document, 85% in the 2002-2003 annual review and 83% in the 2003-2004 annual review. However, the lack of reliability of the PeopleSoft data must be taken into consideration, as discussed in the preceding section.

5.6.22 This situation is explained by a lack of updates of specific language capability objectives for both rotational and non-rotational employees, as well as by a lack of concrete measures for achieving those objectives and mitigating the identified weaknesses. A lack of control over the language capability may further weaken the ability to serve the public and the ability to allow employees to use their language of choice.

## **Recommendations**

**5.6.23 Conduct a review of language capability needs and objectives for both departments, for both rotational and non-rotational employees.**

**5.6.24 Strengthen both departments' monitoring mechanism for language capability, especially for the organizations and professional groups that are weakest in this respect.**

**5.6.25 Revise the official languages directives for both departments to bring them into line with obligations connected with staffing bilingual positions.**

## **Management response and action plan**

**5.6.23 HSD, in conjunction with the working group, will develop a plan.**

**5.6.24 See reply to 5.2.8**

**5.6.25 HSD has updated the current departmental official languages directives and will modify these, as necessary, as the Treasury Board policies change.**