



Office of the
Commissioner of
Official Languages

Commissariat
aux langues
officielles

CHALLENGES

The New Environment for
Language Training in the
Federal Public Service

SEPTEMBER 2013



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Language training in the federal public service has evolved greatly over time, taking on a new direction in the past 10 years as a result of its decentralization to federal institutions. However, it is still not well documented and there currently exists no clear overall picture of the status of language training. The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages therefore decided to take stock of the situation by conducting a study.

This study seeks to describe the language training system that is currently in place, the practices that are the result of this system, and the challenges that it presents. The study is based on four data sources: documentation, interviews with key players in language training, in-depth interviews with selected federal institutions and a survey sent to all institutions that are part of the federal public service. In total, from February 2012 to April 2013, 39 individuals were consulted through interviews and 70 federal institutions participated in the survey.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

The relevance of language training. In the public service, the objective is no longer to train individuals without any second-language skills so that they can become fully bilingual public servants. Therefore, language training ought to be geared more towards supporting employees who wish to upgrade their skills to a reasonable level and who show an interest in language learning.

The usefulness of coordination. The new language training system has transformed the role of the Canada School of Public Service. Unfortunately, it has abandoned the coordination of training activities. This coordination had become essential in certain regions, where there are only a limited number of public servants who are spread across the offices of several institutions.

Effectiveness of quality assurance. The Canada School of Public Service has maintained its quality assurance role in language training, but only as part of Public Works and Government Services Canada's standing offers. Many institutions tend to be guided by the cost of suppliers. Often this means that service providers other than those who have a standing offer with Public Works and Government Services Canada are used. The work of these service providers is not subject to the watchful eye of the Canada School of Public Service. In addition, the resources available to the School's regional offices make it difficult for them to exercise their role of quality assurance.

Accountability. As with any other governmental activity, language training must be subject to accountability measures in order to demonstrate adequacy, effectiveness and efficiency in its implementation. However, data collection lacks consistency across the public service.

Language retention. While the skills retention component of language training competes for funding with mandatory language training, it should continue to see resources allocated to it. However, it is reasonable that an employee's prior commitment to his or her language retention be considered as a criterion in making funding available. In other words, employers must encourage employee language retention through various means, but employees must also demonstrate their own efforts in this regard.

How effective is language training? Even though this study did not set out to examine the effectiveness of language training, it did solicit perceptions about it. Three quarters of respondents believe that language training enables employees to prepare for the test, but that the training is not enough to make them comfortable using the acquired skills in their work. In addition, the same number of respondents believes there are employees who can communicate effectively in their second language but who have difficulty passing the language proficiency test. Given that these views are widely held, this issue merits further attention.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that deputy heads of federal institutions continue to invest resources in language training to promote the professional development and language retention of their employees. By April 1, 2015, each federal institution should have reached, at a minimum, the level of funding allocated to language training before the budget cuts initiated in 2011.

The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that deputy heads of federal institutions establish, by April 1, 2015, a mechanism (through regional federal councils, the network of persons responsible for official languages or others) that would ensure effective and efficient coordination of language training in the regions.

Given the fact that there is no public service-wide accountability mechanism for the language training system, the Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that the deputy heads of each federal institution create a list of indicators, systematically collect data in line with those indicators, and establish a reporting mechanism on language training. These measures should be in place and all federal institutions should be able to report on their language training activities by October 1, 2014.

With language training in the federal public service soon celebrating its 50th anniversary (1964–2014), the Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that the President of the Treasury Board put in place, by October 1, 2014, a panel of independent experts to conduct an in-depth review of the effectiveness of current language training, both in terms of the language skills it produces and the way these skills are evaluated. This review should be undertaken in consultation with the federal institutions that play a key role in this regard (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, Public Service Commission of Canada, Canada School of Public Service, Public Works and Government Services Canada and Canadian Heritage).

LANGUAGE TRAINING TOOL

Based on the findings in this study and in order to help strengthen the language training system as well as assist institutions in a practical way, the Commissioner is making available, on the Office of the Commissioner's Web site, a new tool called *Effective Language Training Practices: On-line Tool for Federal Institutions*.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Language training in the federal public service has been one of the pillars of Canada's official languages policy since the 1960s. It has evolved greatly over time, taking on a new direction in the past 10 years as a result of its decentralization to federal institutions. However, it is still not well documented and there currently exists no clear overall picture of the status of language training. The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages therefore decided to take stock of the situation and commissioned a study. Its findings are presented in this report.

1.1 BACKGROUND

Language training began in the 1960s, at the same time as the federal official languages policy was taking shape. In 1964, before Canada's *Official Languages Act* (OLA) was even introduced, language training centres were already structuring second-language training. For a long time, language training was the responsibility of the Public Service Commission of Canada and was subject to directives established by the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. A major transformation occurred in the 2000s. Before this transformation, approximately 150,000 federal public servants benefited from language training services.¹

In 2004, the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat adopted the *Policy on Official Languages for Human Resources Management*, which required, as a general rule, that bilingual positions and functions be staffed on an imperative basis, meaning by candidates who have already met the language requirements of the position. A position could be staffed on a non-imperative basis under exceptional circumstances if an employee did not have the required language skills, in which case the institution had to provide language training to enable the employee to acquire these skills. This policy created great demand for language training. In 2003, the number of learners began to grow substantially, and a waiting list was established. In the *Action Plan for Official Languages 2003–2008*, \$38.6 million was invested over three years, and the waiting list continued to grow during the period of time covered by the Action Plan.

Also, in 2004, Language Training Canada was moved from the Public Service Commission of Canada to the new Canada School of Public Service. The School thereby

became the institution responsible for ensuring access to language training for federal public servants and had to try to accommodate the growing number of second-language learners.²

In 2006, the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's *Policy on Learning, Training, and Development* set out the mandate of the School. This policy, which covered language training, described the sharing of training responsibilities among deputy heads of institutions, the Canada School of Public Service and the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat.

In 2007, the Canada School of Public Service implemented a new language training management model, which transferred responsibility to the deputy heads of federal institutions, in accordance with the *Financial Administration Act*, and outsourced training delivery to private schools. The School, however, retained responsibility for developing learning programs, tools and methods, for providing advice on learning and for ensuring the quality of services provided by the private sector.

The context and conditions for implementing the policies and directives on language training have therefore changed greatly over the past decade, and accountability is less evident. This situation raises a number of questions.

A new language training management model has been progressively put in place and has brought about a change in the way responsibilities are shared among the players in this sector. What description can we give of the language training system that has resulted from these changes?

Language training responds to the requirements of imperative staffing, enables federal employees to progress in their career towards management positions and helps them maintain their language skills. But to what extent do federal institutions assume responsibility of these three components of language training?

The decentralization of language training responsibilities has created ambiguity with regard to accountability, and it is difficult to know whether training is actually contributing to the bilingual capacity of employees. This concern became even more pronounced following the federal government's 2011 Strategic and Operating Review. Are language training budgets at risk?

¹ Canada School of Public Service. (2007). *Report to Parliament 2001–2006*. Ottawa, p. 4. Note: Even though the School was not created until 2004, it published a five-year report on the files for which it was responsible between 2001 and 2006.

² In the context of this study, "second language" refers to the second official language.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study commissioned by the Office of the Commissioner sought to document the current status of language training in the federal public service in order to, first, describe the system in place and, second, identify the resulting practices and the challenges that must be overcome.

This study focused on the organization and management of language training, and examined the following:

- the policies that guide language training;
- the rules that govern it;
- the planning and management of supply and demand;
- the resources dedicated to language training;
- the promotion of language training;
- the learning methods and approaches used;
- the suppliers who provide language training;
- the perception of the achieved results;
- learning retention after training; and
- accountability.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

The study is based on four data sources: documentation, interviews with key players in language training, in-depth interviews with selected federal institutions and a survey sent to all institutions that are part of the federal public service.³

Documentation. The documentation that was reviewed comprises reports from the Public Service Commission of Canada and the Canada School of Public Service, as well as official and independent publications dealing specifically with language training.

Exploratory interviews. Interviews were conducted with people who have language training responsibilities in different institutions, such as the Public Service Commission of Canada, the Human Resources Council, the Language Industry Association (ALLIA) and the Canada School of Public Service (western, National Capital Region and eastern offices). These interviews sought to give a general overview and identify the key issues within the federal public service language training system, both in the National Capital Region and in the other regions. Most of the interviews were conducted in person in the National Capital Region (n=4),

some were conducted by telephone with employees in regional offices (n=2), and others were conducted in writing only (n=4). In total, 25 individuals were consulted during these interviews, which took place between February and December 2012.

In-depth interviews. The team responsible for conducting these interviews examined in greater detail how language training has evolved over the past few years and how it is currently delivered in five federal institutions. The institutions were chosen according to the variety that exists in the public service, specifically in terms of status (e.g. department or agency), size and geographical location. Five interviews, four of which were in person and one of which was by telephone, were conducted with a total of 14 individuals from these institutions in January and February 2013. The respondents held senior management or middle management positions in human resources, language training or official languages. In each case, the respondents had sent a written version of their answers before the interview. The findings of these interviews are reflected in this report, but the confidentiality of the sources has been maintained.

Survey questionnaire. An invitation to respond voluntarily to an on-line questionnaire was sent to the deputy heads of 103 federal institutions that are part of the federal public service, with a copy to the official languages champions.⁴ The invitation was sent on March 6, 2013; a first reminder was sent on March 20 and a second on March 27. The survey was available on-line from March 6 to April 8, 2013. Seventy questionnaires, representing a response rate of 68%, were completed,⁵ which is very good for a voluntary survey. The respondents for the most part represented departments (34%),⁶ agencies (26%), commissions or offices of commissioners (14%) and tribunals (13%). The head offices of most (87%) of the institutions that responded to the survey are located in the National Capital Region, and the majority (67%) of these institutions have less than 1,000 full-time equivalent employees.

Limitations. It is important to recognize that the responses from the federal institutions may have biases. The decision to participate in an interview and respond to a survey from the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, and the formulation of the answers, may be motivated by a desire to be compliant. However, the high response rate and the confidential nature of the responses help mitigate the effect of this probable bias.

³ The study instruments can be found in the appendix.

⁴ The federal public service consists of the core public administration (the departments and agencies listed in Schedules I and IV of the *Financial Administration Act* [FAA], and whose employer is the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat) and the separate agencies (Schedule V of the FAA). It does not include, for example, Crown corporations.

⁵ The profile of survey respondents can be found in Table 4.1 in appendix.

⁶ As the total number of respondents (n=70) was less than 100, the percentages are for information purposes only.

Analysis. The information was gathered and analyzed to determine the key characteristics, practices and issues of the language training system. These findings were then placed in the broader context of official languages.

1.4 REPORT OUTLINE

This report describes how the federal public service language training system works. First, a portrait of the legal, regulatory and institutional contexts that give rise to language training is presented (section 2). Then, the current language training system is described (section 3). Several components were examined: leadership of deputy heads, determining language training needs, allocated budgetary resources, delivery of training services, learning methods used and evaluation of learning. In describing this system, best practices (see the textboxes) and challenges are identified.⁷ In the conclusion (section 4), the study's findings and recommendations are presented. Finally, the study is accompanied by the tool *Effective Language Training Practices: On-line Tool for Federal Institutions*, for federal employees from deputy heads to new employees. This tool is available on-line on the Office of the Commissioner's Web site.

2. CONTEXT

The language training provided to federal public servants stems from the spirit of the OLA (section 2.1) and is regulated by the policies and directives of the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (section 2.2). While each federal institution is now responsible for the language training provided to its employees, some play a central role in terms of language training (section 2.3). The following paragraphs describe this role.

2.1 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Canada's OLA does not make any mention of language training provided in the federal public service. However, it does recognize, in its preamble, that the Government of Canada is committed to "enhanc[ing] opportunities for all to learn both English and French." It also recognizes that every federal institution has the duty to ensure

. . . such measures are taken . . . as can reasonably be taken to establish and maintain work environments of the institution that are conducive to the effective use of both official languages and accommodate the use of either official language by its officers and employees. (section 36(2))

In addition, the OLA prescribes a model of institutional bilingualism and the obligations pertaining to, among other things, service to the public and language of work. To comply, federal institutions must designate certain positions or functions as bilingual and staff them with candidates who meet the corresponding language requirements. Under exceptional circumstances, institutions may provide language training to employees who hold these positions or candidates chosen following a selection process who must meet the language requirements of their position. Institutions can also prepare for bilingual succession by providing language training for employees' professional development. This is why language training is an integral part of federal institutional bilingualism. The specific conditions under which this system is implemented are set out in the policies and directives described in the following paragraphs.

2.2 POLICIES AND DIRECTIVES

The language training system is currently governed by a series of policies that were renewed in November 2012. Before describing this new policy suite, the general principles guiding language training until 2012 should be noted.

Before 2012

The *Official Languages Policy Framework* (2004) positioned language training as a service that had to be provided by federal institutions to employees who needed to develop the language skills required for their position or function.

The *Policy on Official Languages for Human Resources Management* (2004) set out language training directives. It identified three major functions of language training:

- 1. Non-imperative staffing:** Language training is provided to a person appointed to a bilingual position whose linguistic profile does not meet the requirements of the position but who has made a formal commitment to acquire the language skills required for the position within

⁷ Quotations taken from the interviews appear in this report in italics.

two years of the appointment. The *Public Service Official Languages Exclusion Approval Order (2005)* states that public servants who agree to become bilingual to obtain a non-imperative appointment are entitled to “language training at public expense.” (section 1.(a))

- 2. Professional development:** Language training may also be provided to employees who want to develop their second-language skills in order to advance in their career.
- 3. Learning retention:** The institution is responsible for helping employees who have learned their second language maintain the acquired skills, by providing them with resources and working conditions conducive to the use of both official languages. Employees are also responsible for taking measures to maintain their language skills.

The *Policy on Official Languages for Human Resources Management (2004)* also stated that teaching methods and other teaching approaches, as well as scheduling, duration of training, training-related evaluation processes, premises and materials, would be adapted to accommodate persons with special needs, disabilities or learning disabilities.

Since 2012

The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's *Policy on Official Languages (2012)* positions language training as a way of attaining institutional bilingualism:

Institutional bilingualism is the result of appropriate staffing processes as well as an investment by the institution in employees' language training and development, and the availability of adequate technological and other material resources. (section 3.6)

The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's *Directive on Official Languages for People Management (2012)* states that deputy heads are responsible for the following:

Offering language training to employees who wish to develop their second-language skills in order to advance in their career and possibly hold bilingual positions in the future. English-speaking and French-speaking employees have equal access to language training for career development purposes. The terms and conditions are negotiated between the employee and the manager. They reflect the respective needs of employees and the institution, as well as the available resources. (section 6.1.8)

This directive also states that, in exceptional situations where a designated bilingual position is staffed with a candidate who does not meet the language requirements, managers are responsible for the following:

Ensuring language training is provided as soon as possible so the candidate can acquire the second-language skills required. (section 6.3.3.1)

Appendix 2 of this directive states that, when the linguistic profile of a position is modified to become bilingual, the incumbent of the position is encouraged to take language training, and the institution must provide this training.

2.3 INSTITUTIONS THAT PLAY A CENTRAL ROLE

A number of institutions have a role to play in language training for the entire federal public service. These institutions are the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, the Public Service Commission of Canada, the Canada School of Public Service, Public Works and Government Services Canada, and the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages.

Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat does not play an operational role in language training, but it is responsible for developing the policies and directives mentioned in section 2.2 as well as the *Policy on Learning, Training, and Development (2006)*.

Public Service Commission of Canada

While the Public Service Commission of Canada was responsible for providing language training in the federal public service until 2004, today it plays a parallel role. It monitors staffing, which could impact language training, and can therefore make recommendations on staffing. It also evaluates public servants' second-language skills (evaluation of public servants' first-language skills is the responsibility of the employee's manager). As a result, the role of the Commission may have a more direct impact on language training. Changes made to language proficiency tests affect the pass rate and, as a result, the duration of the language training necessary.

Canada School of Public Service

The Canada School of Public Service was created in 2004, combining three institutions: Language Training Canada, Training and Development Canada and the Canadian Centre for Management Development. Before that, Language Training Canada fell under the Public Service Commission of Canada. In 2006, the Canada School of Public Service's mandate was clarified in what was called "the new training model." Under this new model, responsibility for training (including language training) was shared between the employer (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat), the employees, and the deputy heads of institutions. The new language training model is anchored in the following key elements:

- Bilingualism is acquired through career-long learning;
- Public servants have greater access to flexible learning approaches, methods and tools;
- Maintenance is a legitimate and integral part of workplace culture;
- Language training is available through quality-assured providers.⁸

The Canada School of Public Service therefore had to focus on establishing standards for quality assurance and compliance monitoring of authorized suppliers; developing on-line language training resources; researching learning methods and technologies, especially to respond to special needs; and supporting the development of employee language training plans.

While assuming these roles, the Canada School of Public Service continued to offer language training until 2012 to fill in the gaps when the available service was insufficient. For example, it provided full-time training to groups learning English in the National Capital Region, and coordinated and delivered language training in the regions. It also continued to provide language training to persons with learning disabilities. In April 2012, the School stopped providing language training directly and coordinating delivery.

The Canada School of Public Service set up a partnership with Canadian universities to broaden access to its second-language learning products. This initiative, funded under the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008–2013, was intended to contribute to public service renewal by developing the bilingual capacity of students interested in a career in the public service. However, the Government of Canada did not include this initiative in the Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013–2018.

Public Works and Government Services Canada

Public Works and Government Services Canada is responsible for managing calls for tenders and standing offers, including those involving language training service providers. All the standing offers are currently being renewed in this respect. Until very recently, 11 standing offers covered full-time and part-time, individual and group, English and French second-language training in the National Capital Region and in the other regions. In 2013, the Department will have put in place around 30 new standing offers for language training.

Minister Responsible for Official Languages⁹

Over the past 10 years, the minister responsible for official languages has overseen three horizontal initiatives—the 2003 *Action Plan for Official Languages*, the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008–2013 and the most recent Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013–2018—which have illustrated the government's priorities with respect to official languages. While \$38.6 million was allocated to language training for public servants in the 2003 Action Plan, nothing was allocated for this purpose in the 2008 Roadmap for Linguistic Duality or the recent Roadmap for Official Languages. This represents a significant decline as far as the priorities set out in these horizontal initiatives are concerned.

⁸ Canada School of Public Service. (2007). *Report to Parliament 2001-2006*. Ottawa, p. 16.

⁹ The title of the minister responsible for official languages has varied from initiative to initiative: the *Action Plan for Official Languages* (2003–2008) was signed by the Honourable Stéphane Dion, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs; the *Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013: Acting for the Future* was signed by the Honourable Josée Verner, Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages and Minister responsible for La Francophonie; and the *Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013-2018: Education, Immigration, Communities* was signed by the Honourable James Moore, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages.

3. CURRENT PORTRAIT OF LANGUAGE TRAINING

The language training system consists of a number of elements. First, deputy heads of institutions must demonstrate leadership in order to make this training available and prioritize it in the organizational culture (section 3.1). Then, institutions must identify the language training needs of their personnel (section 3.2), mobilize the budgetary resources that will be assigned (section 3.3) and select and oversee the suppliers who will provide the training (section 3.4) and the learning methods they will use (section 3.5). Finally, those responsible for the language training system must ensure the results of the training are properly evaluated (section 3.6).

The following information comes from the collected documentary sources as well as the interviews and survey that were carried out. In describing this system, an effort was made to highlight best practices (illustrated in textboxes) and challenges to be overcome.

3.1 LEADERSHIP BY DEPUTY HEADS

Since 2006, deputy heads have been explicitly responsible for managing language training in their institutions. This responsibility extends to all aspects of training, from determining needs, allocating budget, arranging delivery, coordinating services, selecting service suppliers and establishing staff conditions to determining the priority given to language training in the organizational culture.

Approximately 50% of institutions have a language training directive

Deputy heads can use various strategies to promote the learning and use of both official languages in their institution. Some have implemented a policy to this end; others a directive or guidelines on language training in their institution.¹⁰ The survey found that approximately half of the institutions consulted (36) have a directive, the majority of which (30) introduced this directive in the past 10 years. Most of these institutions also have language training guidelines. The policy statements that were consulted or

that were presented describe, in most cases, a sharing of responsibilities between three levels: senior management, which provides leadership; team managers, who see to learning retention for themselves and their staff; and employees, who make a personal commitment to learning and maintaining their second-language skills.

Leading by example

Senior management can also promote language training through leading by example. Using both official languages at public events and talking about the importance of knowing and using both languages in the workplace encourages employees to consider language training for their own professional development. It was observed that in some institutions, senior management makes language training a central element of the organizational culture.

THE DEPUTY HEAD VALUES OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

The deputy head publicly states that the institution values the respect for and use of both official languages, both in communications with and services to the public, and with respect to language of work rights.

The deputy head uses both official languages in organization-wide communications.

The champions are leaders in providing information

The vast majority (93%) of institutions consulted provide information to employees on language training in a variety of ways. New employees of a given institution may be exposed to this in the orientation documentation they receive on arrival (see Table 4.3 in appendix). However, only about half of the institutions consulted report adhering to this practice.

THE DEPUTY HEAD MAKES LANGUAGE TRAINING A PRIORITY

The deputy head develops a policy or directive on language training for the institution. This policy or directive clearly describes the responsibilities shared among the institution's management, the manager and the employee, who commits to taking language training.

The deputy head makes knowledge of both official languages a component of the institution's succession planning.

¹⁰ A selection of best practices are listed on the *Osez! Dare!* Web site: <http://osez-dare.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ldd/colr-rrlo-eng.asp#chp14>.

The intranet may include a space dedicated to available language training. Some institutions follow up directly with employees who have included language training in their training plans. Posters or e-mails occasionally announce language training activities open to everyone. In general, the information that is presented seems to be more about the types of language training and the procedures to request it. This information is most often distributed by Human Resources and supervisors (see Table 4.4 in appendix). It is interesting to note that the official languages champions play this role in about 45% of the institutions consulted, which is a testament to their leadership. However, the deputy head only exercises this leadership in less than 5% of cases.

THE DEPUTY HEAD DISTRIBUTES THE INFORMATION HIMSELF OR HERSELF

The deputy head personally invites all employees to consider the language training activities and resources offered within their institution and on-line.

Language training is not always an integral part of professional development programs

Some institutions make knowledge of both official languages a normal and early step in all employees’ professional development. Integrating professional training and language training strengthens the credibility of language training. According to the survey, about 70% of institutions consider language training to be an integral part of their employees’ professional development. It is nevertheless surprising that about 20% of institutions do not see it this way.

Data collection insufficient for accountability

For many years, the Canada School of Public Service and the Public Service Commission of Canada (Language Training Canada) collected data on language training in the public service as a whole. According to the School, this data made it possible to track the number of learners, the number of hours of training received, the pace of learning, the starting points and the results obtained. Under the new training model, the Canada School of Public Service now only compiles data for private language schools on the standing offer list.

The *Policy on Official Languages for Human Resources Management* (2004) specified the type of data institutions had to compile. However, the *Directive on Official Languages for People Management* (2012) is somewhat vague in this regard, making heads of human resources responsible for “keeping files and information systems current in order to provide reports to the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer within the Treasury Board Secretariat . . . upon request.”

VALUABLE DATA

The institution keeps a record of its language training activities, including data on:

- the number of employees in training;
- the duration of the training;
- the types of training offered (mandatory, professional development, learning retention);
- the method used (individual or group courses, at the supplier’s facilities, at the workplace or distance learning, full-time or part-time);
- service providers;
- procurement methods (Public Works and Government Services Canada standing offer, standing offer from the institution, calls for tenders, sole sourcing, internal trainer);
- service delivery costs; and
- cost of replacing employees in training.

The vast majority (84%) of respondents to the survey said they keep a record of language training data (see Table 4.13 in appendix). Nearly a quarter of these respondents admit that data is not collected systematically. Most institutions collect data on the number of employees who receive training, the number of training courses provided and the number of hours of training taken. The survey found that nearly all institutions with a budget dedicated to language training also report compiling financial data on language training. This data deals essentially with supplier-related costs. Costs related to replacing personnel and the salary equivalent of time spent by employees on training are rarely calculated.

Language training should be an essential commodity, like pens. This way, a central authority would monitor how much it costs government-wide. [translation]
– Study participant

According to the in-depth interviews that were conducted, these data records are often not incorporated into information management systems and are not always available electronically. Given the lack of standardization in the data collected, it would be difficult to assemble the necessary information, and even more difficult to make comparisons. This means no official publication reports this data for the public service as a whole.

Manager performance

Some institutions demonstrate that language training can be taken into account not only during employees' performance evaluations, but also during those of their managers. Some of the institutions consulted evaluate their managers based on their contribution to the advancement of official languages in their division. This evaluation of their performance determines whether employees reporting to the manager meet the language requirements of their positions, whether their second-language tests are up to date, whether the manager makes efforts to promote employees' second-language retention and whether employees use their second language.

MANAGERS ARE ACCOUNTABLE

The deputy head holds managers responsible for contributing to the institution's official languages objectives and takes this into account in managers' performance evaluations.

3.2 DETERMINING LANGUAGE TRAINING NEEDS

Deputy heads are responsible for determining their employees' language training needs. In general, this is done through a consultation process that takes into account the needs of the employees and the organization. In the institutions consulted, team managers are responsible for discussing employees' needs with them as part of their individual learning plan. This list of needs is then sent to a higher level, such as Human Resources, the official languages division or the branch, and is taken into account when determining institution-wide needs. The other factors taken into consideration include the operational needs of the language training candidate's work unit, the budgetary resources, the appropriate learning methods for the candidate and institutional needs resulting from staff movements (recruitment, promotions, retirements).

CRITERIA FOR GRANTING LANGUAGE TRAINING

The institution chooses to grant language training to employees based on certain criteria, including the following:

- the employee must achieve the language level required by the position to which he or she has been appointed on a non-imperative basis;
- the employee demonstrates tangible commitment and motivation;
- language training will help the employee participate in the institutions' succession plan;
- language training will help the employee advance in his or her career;
- budgetary resources allow language training to be granted;
- the learning methods the employee needs are available;
- the employee can be spared during work hours to take the training.

More imperative staffing = less language training

As 90% of the institutions responding to the survey reported, mandatory language training resulting from non-imperative staffing is a top priority. However, this mandatory training seems to be declining. Most of the interview respondents pointed out that imperative staffing reduces the need for this training. This fact appears to be corroborated in the recent Public Service Commission of Canada Annual Report:¹¹

Over the past six years, appointees entitled to receive language training because they did not meet the language requirements of the position when appointed through a non-imperative process accounted for a decreasing share of appointments, falling from 1.7% in 2005-2006 to 1.0% this year.

The order of priority for the following needs varies by institution:

- institutional succession;
- helping employees who participate in national or interdepartmental meetings;
- increasing the chances of promotion; and
- language retention.

¹¹ Public Service Commission of Canada. (2012). *Annual Report 2011-2012*. Ottawa, p. 45.

USING THE CANADA SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE FOR INDIVIDUAL LEARNING PLANS

The institution plans the language training of its employees by using the services of the Canada School of Public Service to develop a language learning plan for each learner. This plan is based on an evaluation of the employee's existing knowledge and the employee's ability to learn the second language. The plan recommends the starting point, the pace of learning and the estimated duration of training.

Employee interest is an important criterion

An additional criteria: The employee is willing to devote personal time and resources to learning the second language. – Study participant

A number of criteria can be used to determine which employees would benefit from language training at the institution's expense. Employees' degree of initiative or interest seems to be one of the most important criteria: the vast majority of institutions refer to it in the survey (see Table 4.2 in appendix). For example, some institutions expect interested employees to make an effort to take language training outside the workplace or to have demonstrated good performance in previous training. Employees' degree of commitment during language training, specifically attendance, participation and performance, are also taken into account. Some institutions have learners sign an agreement stating their responsibilities and what is expected of them. Other criteria are also involved, such as management potential or succession needs.

EMPLOYER-EMPLOYEE AGREEMENT

An employer-employee agreement sets out reciprocal expectations during and after training. These expectations cover training activities, learning efforts and second-language retention efforts.

3.3 BUDGETARY RESOURCES

Language training is different from other types of professional training because it is typically spread over a relatively long period of time. This entails significant costs and has an impact on the time learners can dedicate to their work. There are even cases where the allocation of budgetary resources defines the scope and nature of the language training provided. Until the new management model was introduced in 2006, institutions had a budget line item, set out by the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, dedicated to language training.

Half of institutions have staff dedicated to language training management

When language training management was decentralized, the costs were transferred to the institutions. Some of them report having had to create language training management units to compensate for the withdrawal of the Canada School of Public Service. However, other institutions report having terminated the services of language training advisors due to budget limitations. According to the survey, half of the institutions currently have personnel dedicated to language training management and, for a quarter of these respondents, the personnel have been in place since before 2006. In the majority of cases, this represents one full-time equivalent or less.

A LANGUAGE TRAINING UNIT RIGHT IN THE INSTITUTION

The institution has a language training service coordination unit or function, which consists of personnel assigned specifically to this task.

The language training unit is part of the human resources unit or the official languages division, and therefore is incorporated into professional development activities.

Language training unit personnel participate in the development of individual training plans, plan the provision of training and coordinate activities.

They follow learners' progress and give them pedagogical advice.

They make sure employees fulfill their commitment to learn and to attend the training.

They control the quality of the language training suppliers' work.

Budget allocations can be made centrally by the institution or decentralized to administrative units. Some institutions have opted for centralized language training services provided to all personnel, consisting of training centres, media libraries, teachers or pedagogical advisors. Services provided this way, most often for professional development purposes, are under the institution’s responsibility. Otherwise, the training is paid for with the administrative unit budget, on approval of the manager and based on funding availability.

Since 2006, the budget has stayed the same in 50% of institutions

The survey found that three quarters of institutions have dedicated language training budgets. Of these, a quarter indicate that these budgets have decreased since 2006 (see Table 4.12 in appendix), close to half state that the budget has remained the same and about another quarter say that their budget has increased.

Since 2011, budget cuts have affected language training for professional development purposes most of all

The Strategic and Operating Review initiated in 2011 seems to have led to a decrease in the budgets allocated to language training. The institution representatives that were interviewed spoke of cuts varying between 30% and 60% of their language training budget or activities. This reduction affects training for professional development purposes or learning retention in particular, because mandatory training is the priority. However, these institutions say they have

found other ways to provide training, for example in groups rather than individually. According to the survey, institutions that report having a budget dedicated to language training estimate that this budget has fluctuated as follows since 2011 (see Table 4.12 in appendix):

- For mandatory training, about 20% of institutions have seen their budget drop, 60% have seen it stay the same and 10% have seen it increase.
- For professional development training, 30% of these institutions have seen their budget drop, about 50% have seen it stay the same and 5% have seen it increase.

Approximately 75% of these same respondents believe the budgetary resources dedicated to language training meet their present needs (see Table 4.11 in appendix).

3.4 SERVICE DELIVERY

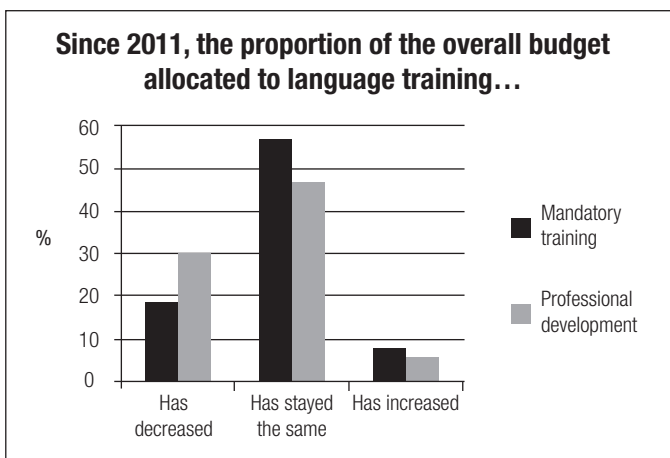
Under the language training model adopted in 2006, language training essentially was to be provided by the private sector. The Canada School of Public Service therefore changed their focus to developing quality standards, a second-language learning program, physical and on-line pedagogical resources, and individual learning plans. Until very recently, the School also provided certain types of training to learners with special needs as well as groups not served by the standing offers and certain regional offices.

Multiple ways to access suppliers

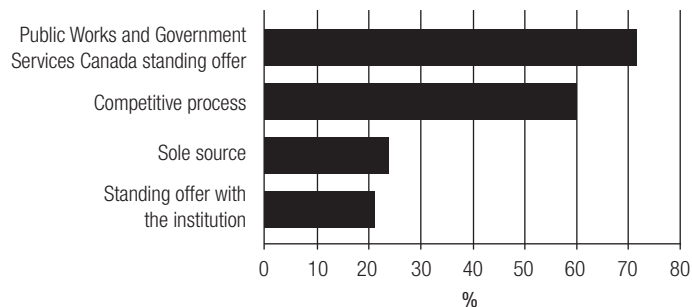
The availability of language training is currently managed in a variety of ways:

- comprehensive standing offers managed by Public Works and Government Services Canada and supervised by the Canada School of Public Service;
- standing offers from the institution;
- ad hoc competitive processes managed by the institutions;
- sole source suppliers retained by the institutions; and
- sharing resources among multiple institutions.

At the time of the survey, about 70% of respondents said that they used the standing offers from Public Works and Government Services Canada (see graph on next page and, for more details, Table 4.8 in appendix). The Department,



Ways of choosing service providers



together with the Canada School of Public Service, has undertaken the renewal of all the language training standing offers.¹² Since 2013, it has had close to 30 new standing offers in place for the National Capital Region.¹³

Until now, some institutions have opted for their own standing offers. According to the survey, 20% of institutions still use this method. Some institutions also launch calls for tenders to choose a service provider for a fixed period. This method was used by 60% of the survey respondents. The in-depth interviews revealed that this method was particularly useful for federal offices in the regions. In some cases, institutions also use a private school, or hire schools or language teachers directly for a fixed period, as needed. Nearly a quarter of survey respondents say they have used this method.

Nearly 90% of survey respondents are nevertheless of the opinion that current access to language training providers meets their needs (see Table 4.11 in appendix). Moreover, 85% indicated that these services meet their training objectives, and 80% feel they are getting good value for money.

I am surprised we are still going in this trend of not sharing. Sharing is all over government, yet we are decentralizing language learning! – **Study participant**

Sharing benefits institutions

Some institutions pool their resources in order to more easily access language training services. This is the case in the regions, for example, where some regional federal councils coordinate resource sharing and the determination of needs in order to provide services to institutions that do not have the required number of learners or funds.

For certain institutions with more developed training facilities, another form of resource sharing involves allowing other institutions to use their services on a cost-recovery basis. In the National Capital Region, for example, some institutions have memoranda of understanding for service sharing with neighbouring institutions or institutions with complementary or comparable mandates.

INSTITUTIONS SHARE NEEDS AND RESOURCES

An institution that has a language training centre accepts employees from other institutions on a cost-recovery basis to optimize its investment.

A smaller institution or regional office signs an agreement in principle with other institutions in order to share their resources and create a critical mass of learners. The regional federal council may facilitate this sharing.

The best price, but at what cost?

. . . the current approach, which almost always favours the lowest bidder and penalizes quality schools.

[translation] – **Study participant**

The study found that these ways of hiring service suppliers are not without risk. Representatives from private schools affiliated with AILIA expressed their dissatisfaction with the standing offers system in place before 2013. They said that the qualification criteria were very demanding and encouraged serious schools to invest in facilities and

CUSTOMIZED, QUALIFIED RESOURCES

An institution uses the Public Works and Government Services Canada standing offers for the region concerned to identify a qualified service provider.

An institution hires one or more permanent qualified teachers for the workplace to meet various needs.

¹² Public Works and Government Services Canada reports on the status of its language training procurement tools at the following site: <http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/app-acq/eaafi-sltpt-eng.html>.

¹³ At the time of publication, Public Works and Government Services Canada was still in consultation regarding standing offers for the other regions of Canada.

professional development, only to then receive few students. AILIA members expressed discontent with the number of institutions looking for discount suppliers rather than using the comprehensive standing offers for this purpose. These representatives and other interview participants were also displeased that contracts awarded to bidders offering the lowest price introduced a number of suppliers who sacrificed quality to profitability. Several of them also observed that these suppliers made the lowest bid but took more time to achieve the expected learning results. They also stated that, at this lower price, these suppliers cannot invest in the necessary resource development, equipment or expertise. In order to counter this detrimental effect, some players are calling for an accreditation mechanism for all language training suppliers.

Sometimes, language schools will give a lower estimate of time, hoping to get the contract and then add hours of learning during the process. – Study participant

The survey of institutions found that the cost of services is the key criteria used by the most (90%) institutions (see Table 4.9 in appendix). Reputed quality is the most important factor for about 75% of respondents, while being qualified by a standing offer was selected by only about 45% of respondents. Note that the recent standing offers contain a large number of requirements for suppliers, for example, qualified teachers and pedagogical advisors (training and experience); hiring, professional development and teaching personnel coaching plans; teaching spaces; computer equipment; Internet connection; rest and meal areas; accessibility for people with reduced mobility; and parking availability.

The key issue here is ensuring the standing offers are actually used by the institutions. The schools that took these offers seriously and equipped themselves with the resources necessary to provide quality training are penalized, because they invested to meet the criteria so they could train learners within the prescribed time frames, but then did not receive a sufficient number of learners.

Challenges in the regions

Recent changes to language training management seem to have posed particular challenges in the regions. With the end of the group training coordination and service delivery role played by the Canada School of Public Service regional offices, institutions in the regions feel they were left on their own. Private language schools are rare in the regions or seem to have difficulty meeting the conditions required by the Public Works and Government Services Canada standing offer calls for tenders. In addition, the end of full-time group classes, previously provided and coordinated by the Canada School of Public Service, meant private instruction had to be used more often, which is obviously more expensive. The consequence is that budgets are used mostly for mandatory training, to the detriment of professional development, succession preparation and learning retention.

The challenge of quality assurance

Currently, the quality assurance function is the responsibility of the Canada School of Public Service. However, this institution can only exercise this function in the context of comprehensive standing offers. This means a large part of language training is not subject to quality control. More systematic use of the new standing offers put in place by Public Works and Government Services Canada could correct this situation. However, the study revealed that the Canada School of Public Service cannot easily fulfill this role with the resources available to it outside the National Capital Region. The School currently has only two regional offices, and they must cover immense territories with limited budget and staff. Language training advisors in institutions, who could previously exercise a certain degree of monitoring of the quality of services offered, have almost all given way to human resources units, which have less experience with language training.

3.5 LEARNING METHODS

In either of the two official languages, language training services are provided using various methods: individual or group courses, part-time or full-time, or even through on-line learning. Table 3.1 summarizes how these methods are used to meet different language training needs.

Table 3.1
Language training learning methods

Language Training Learning Method	Full-Time	Part-Time
Individual	Mandatory training	Mandatory training Professional development
Group	Mandatory training	Mandatory training Professional development Learning retention
On-line learning		Professional development Learning retention

No other choice but individual training

Individual language training was recommended when more financial resources were available. This method has the advantage of responding to the needs and availability of the employee. It can be provided on a part-time or full-time basis, and is more frequently used for mandatory training. Given the significant costs, however, today it is mostly used in cases where the learner's position does not accommodate participation in group training, or when federal offices do not have the critical mass to form a group of learners, as is often the case in the regions. According to the survey, part-time training is used more often than full-time, even though institutions use both methods (see Table 4.5 in appendix). One of the issues that arose in the regions following the Canada School of Public Service's withdrawal from the delivery and coordination of training is precisely the increased use of individual training, with a corresponding impact on the overall language training budget. The Canada School of Public Service's withdrawal could in fact end up costing the language training system more.

Group training is favoured by institutions

Group training is certainly the most common method. Many institutions advocate this method, because it is more economical and meets the needs of mandatory training, professional development and learning retention. In addition, it can be provided on a part-time or full-time basis, in a classroom at the supplier's location or in the workplace. However, it is less flexible than individual training and can be more difficult to implement when the number of learners is limited. To overcome this challenge, certain institutions agree to share the course offerings. In some regions, organizations such as regional federal councils coordinate the pooling of resources and needs to create a critical mass allowing group training. The most recent standing offers from Public Works and Government Services Canada

establish a variety of group training options available to all institutions, based on region.¹⁴

On-line learning is the way of the future

Self-study is a learning method that is increasingly being recommended. The Canada School of Public Service has a mandate to develop resources for this purpose and now offers around 50 products, including on-line learning and self-evaluation tools, in English and in French, to improve or maintain language skills. It is accessible to public servants via the School's learning management system portal *MyAccount*.¹⁵ Federal institutions often have spaces reserved for training that also provide materials for self-study of the second language. These resources are useful tools for voluntary learners, but these learners also need to receive help through other activities that tap into their motivation to learn.

¹⁴ Public Works and Government Services Canada posts the shared offers on their site: <http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/app-acq/sflo-olts/ioc-soi-eng.html>.

¹⁵ *MyAccount* is accessible at <http://www.cspc-efpc.gc.ca/myaccount/index-eng.aspx>.

Bilingual meetings: a common way of strengthening the use of both official languages

One of the problems related to training is the method used for language retention. When asked about this topic, close to 85% of institutions said they put strategies in place to promote employees' language retention (see Table 4.10 in appendix). The variety of activities mentioned attest to this effort:

- mentoring: employees can have colleagues act as their mentor in their second language;
- pairing: Anglophone and Francophone employees who are learning their second language participate in exchange activities;
- practice groups;
- grammar workshops;
- intensive short-term training;
- lunchtime conferences or discussions and French Lunch;
- let's Speak English / Parlons français days;
- toastmasters clubs;
- movie lunches;
- radio listening or television watching sessions;
- reading newspapers or magazines; and
- pins that say *Help me improve my English* (or French) or *I want to improve my English* (or French).

The questionnaire also included a list of retention activities that institutions could choose to illustrate their practices. Nearly all respondents chose bilingual meetings, while around half chose from the other options, including informal workplace training sessions, employee pairing, language days and activities, and a reminder on the language training available to all. Around 90% of respondents indicated they encourage their employees to use their second language during and after language training, particularly by holding bilingual meetings and creating opportunities to communicate in both official languages. Lastly, one fifth of respondents were of the opinion that their employees do not succeed in maintaining their skills despite the tools provided (see Table 4.11 in appendix). In fact, a few survey respondents suggested that language retention be included in employees' performance evaluations.

INSTITUTIONS PROACTIVE IN THE USE OF BOTH OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

The institution takes measures to promote the use of both official languages in its offices, such as:

- work meetings in both languages;
- employee activities in both languages;
- name tags identifying employees who can speak both languages; and
- pins that say *Help me improve my English* (or French) or *I want to improve my English* (or French).

We know, however, that bilingual meetings are still a major challenge for federal institutions. According to the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's recent report on official languages, "... a small majority stated that meetings are conducted in both official languages and that employees may use the official language of their choice during meetings in designated bilingual regions."¹⁶ The results of the 2011 Public Service Employee Survey indicate there is a difference in the number of Anglophones (88%) and Francophones (74%) who "strongly agree" or "mostly agree" with the statement "During meetings in my work unit, I feel free to use the official language of my choice."¹⁷

Budgetary resources are a deciding factor in language training for professional development purposes

The choice of learning methods is usually made jointly by the employee and the supervisor. The survey of institutions revealed that the employee is generally called on to participate in the choice, especially when it is for their professional development, but the supervisor plays a prominent role (see Table 4.6 in appendix). The other players mentioned were the employee's branch and the human resources or official languages unit.

Among the criteria used to make this choice, institutions recognize that the employee's workload and the available budget are most important and take precedence over the employee's preferences or special needs (see Table 4.7 in appendix). The budgetary resources criterion is an even more important factor in the case of language training for professional development than in the case of mandatory training.

16 Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. (2012). *2011-2012 Official Languages Annual Report*. Ottawa, p. 4-5.

17 Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. (2012). *2011 Public Service Employee Survey Demographic Results for the Public Service of Canada by First official language*. Question 25. On-line version: <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pses-saff/2011/results-resultats/bq-pq/00/dem885-eng.aspx>.

The survey also revealed that three quarters of institutions allow their employees to take language training during work hours, without having to make up these hours. In comparison, 85% of institutions provide the same accommodation when it involves other types of professional training.

3.6 EVALUATION OF LEARNING

Evaluation of second-language learning is conducted by service providers, to give learners an indication of their acquired knowledge. However, the Public Service Commission of Canada is still the sole authority equipped to determine public servants' second-language skills.

The tests administered by the Public Service Commission of Canada are used to verify employees' level of language proficiency, to decide if a candidate qualifies for a bilingual imperative position, to staff a non-imperative position or to determine language training needs or results. The Public Service Commission of Canada estimates that only 20% of test candidates have taken language training. It should be noted that the Commission's evaluation is not a "before-after" type of test, and it is conducted at the manager's request. The validity period for a language test is five years. Employees can retake the test after 30 days, and its result replaces the result from the earlier test. Candidates can perform a self-assessment to try to determine their proficiency level.

Over the past 10 years, the Public Service Commission of Canada renewed all its oral interaction, written expression and reading comprehension tests. The A, B and C proficiency levels remained the same.¹⁸

Perceived difference between the second-language evaluation test and the ability to communicate in the second official language

The survey brought to light the opinions of institutions regarding the relationship between language training, language test results and employees' actual second-language skills (see Table 4.11 in appendix). Three quarters of respondents believe that language training enables employees to prepare for a test, but that the training is not enough to make them comfortable using the acquired skills

in their work. In addition, the same number of respondents believes there are employees who can communicate effectively in their second language but who have difficulty passing the language proficiency test. These perceptions suggest a relationship between language training and the results of second-language evaluation tests, but do not suggest a relationship between these test results and employees' second-language proficiency, or between language proficiency and test results.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Over the past 50 years, language training in the federal public service has evolved into a system that continues to be surrounded by great interest and complex ramifications. Over the past decade, the change in staffing policies and accountability of deputy heads of federal institutions shifted the purpose of language training and the ways in which it is used. At the same time, the decentralization of responsibility for professional training, which includes language training, has somewhat clouded the operation and effectiveness of the language training system. This is why the Commissioner of Official Languages decided to take stock of this situation by conducting a study.

This study looked at the policies, key players, resources, mechanisms and perceptions surrounding language training. It therefore made it possible to gain an overview of the system in place, as well as the practices and issues within this system, and to submit it for validation to federal institutions using a survey questionnaire. This exercise has made it possible to come to the following conclusions.

The relevance of language training

It is important to note first and foremost that thousands of public servants have benefited from language training over the years, and the public service has therefore been able to better meet the needs of Canadians in both official languages. Second, the results of the study make a convincing argument for the important place that language training still has in Canada's official languages program.

¹⁸ Appendix II includes a description of the second official language qualifications and the proficiency levels, according to the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's standards.

One of the objectives of the OLA is the implementation of federal institutional bilingualism. Yet, we cannot expect all individuals entering the public service to already be fully bilingual. Canadians from different regions across the country do not all have the same opportunities to learn their second official language. The government must therefore continue to invest in language training so that its employees can provide services to and communicate with citizens in both official languages, while also having equal opportunities to advance in their career as bilingual professionals.

There are two sides to language training: not only is it an essential, and even mandatory, tool to meet the language requirements of certain positions, but it is also increasingly becoming a tool that allows public servants to acquire an indispensable skill for advancing in their career.

Over time, the number of public servants in language training has varied based on staffing rules. For example, with the adoption of the imperative staffing principle in 2004, an increased demand for training in order to meet language requirements was noted. Ten years later, the trend seems to have reversed, and training to meet linguistic requirements is decreasing.

Will this new turn of events lead to a decrease in budgetary resources allocated to language training? As noted, language training for public servants is part of the official languages program. It was highlighted and received a funding envelope of \$38.6 million in the 2003 *Action Plan for Official Languages*. It was indirectly included in the *Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013: Acting for the Future*, which targeted university students likely to become public servants. In the *Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013-2018: Education, Immigration, Communities*, it no longer appears.

Since 2011, as a result of the Government of Canada's Strategic and Operating Review, the number of institutions that were subject to budget cuts has increased, particularly with regard to language training for the professional development of employees. Even if there is a growing interest in this type of training, the resources remain largely tied up by mandatory training, since it is a priority everywhere.

There is no doubt that we are currently in a context of responsible management of public funds, for language training as in other policy areas. This context requires institutions and their managers to make choices. An employer can now expect employees to demonstrate commitment towards learning their second language before agreeing that their language training be paid for by the government. This commitment can take the form of personal effort in taking language training or maintaining and developing skills that have already been acquired, for example by making an effort to use this language in their work. Institutions are relying more and more on learners' tangible interest, and making efforts to measure it.

In the public service, the objective is no longer to train individuals without any second-language skills so that they can become fully bilingual public servants. On the contrary, the pool of public servants who attended school in their second language or who have demonstrated an interest in learning their second language is relatively sizeable. Language training ought to therefore be geared more towards supporting employees who wish to upgrade their skills to a reasonable level and who show an interest in language learning. At the same time, the Canada School of Public Service should continue to look for innovative ways, similar to the partnership it had with universities between 2009 and 2012, to develop the bilingual proficiency of young Canadians who will become public servants.

RECOMMENDATION

The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that deputy heads of federal institutions continue to invest resources in language training to promote the professional development and language retention of their employees. By April 1, 2015, each federal institution should have reached, at a minimum, the level of funding allocated to language training before the budget cuts initiated in 2011.

The usefulness of coordination

The new language training system that has been gradually implemented since 2006 transformed the role of the Canada School of Public Service and, before that, of the language training unit within the Public Service Commission of Canada. Unfortunately, it has abandoned the coordination of training activities. This coordination had become essential in certain regions, where there are only a limited number of public servants who are spread across the offices of several institutions. The Canada School of Public Service compensated for this difficulty by forming groups of learners and by retaining the services of training providers.

In regions where the Canada School of Public Service was less present, many institutions identified common needs and pooled their resources to create a critical mass of learners and expand the training offered. Here, regional federal councils, for example, played an intermediary role. This practice is certainly of interest now that the Canada School of Public Service no longer plays a coordination role. Nevertheless, smaller workforces in the regions will compel institutions to use individual training more often, which is more costly than group training. To ensure fairness, institutions will have to take this into account in their budget allocations.

RECOMMENDATION

The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that deputy heads of federal institutions establish, by April 1, 2015, a mechanism (through regional federal councils, the network of persons responsible for official languages or others) that would ensure effective and efficient coordination of language training in the regions.

Effectiveness of quality assurance

The Canada School of Public Service has maintained its quality assurance role in language training, but only as part of Public Works and Government Services Canada's standing offers. This study revealed that this function had some pitfalls. On the one hand, sufficient language training services are provided, particularly in the National Capital Region. Institutions have several standing offers, calls for tenders or sole sources at their disposal. However, since many institutions tend to be guided by the cost of suppliers, service providers that do not have a standing offer with Public Works and Government Services Canada are often used. The work of these service providers is not subject to the watchful eye of the Canada School of Public Service.

The renewal of Public Works and Government Services Canada's standing offers that is currently under way across Canada could be an opportunity to find a greater number of qualified suppliers. Would the challenge then be to encourage more federal institutions to use the standing offers mechanism, for which the Canada School of Public Service would ensure quality?

In addition, as part of its quality assurance role, the Canada School of Public Service must help develop the terms of reference for Public Works and Government Services Canada standing offers and monitor the compliance of suppliers hired under these offers. While language training is more concentrated in the National Capital Region, the territory to cover is the entire country. It has been noted that the Canada School of Public Service now has only two regional offices: one for the provinces west of Ontario, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories and the other for the rest of the country. The resources available to the school's regional offices make it difficult for them to exercise their role of quality assurance.

Accountability

As with any other governmental activity, language training must be subject to accountability measures in order to demonstrate adequacy, effectiveness and efficiency in its implementation. The *Policy on Official Languages for Human Resources Management* (2004) included a set of minimal indicators that institutions had to use to report to the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. The consultations carried out during the course of this study did not detect the presence of any such accountability, and the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's most recent directive does not prescribe any data collection on the subject whatsoever.

It is known, however, that deputy heads are responsible for the language training provided to their employees. Many best practices in this area have been noted, such as the fact that an increasing number of institutions are implementing language training directives. Others rely on their official languages champions to promote language training among employees. Some institutions even integrate managers' contribution to staff compliance with language proficiency levels, skill retention and the use of both official languages within their teams into their performance evaluations.

However, data collection lacks consistency when it comes to this aspect of managers' performance. One of the problems is that expenses coming from central budgets and the budgets administered by the managers are not always consolidated for accountability purposes.

The following indicators would provide sufficient information for deputy heads to demonstrate their commitment in this regard:

- number of employees who have received language training;
- number of language training sessions taken;
- number of language training sessions taken per employee;
- number of hours of language training per employee;
- number of language training sessions taken to meet the language requirements of positions;
- number of language training sessions taken for professional development purposes;
- number of language training sessions taken by learning method;
- costs of the various service providers;
- costs of replacing employees in language training; and
- salary costs for employees in language training.

RECOMMENDATION

Given the fact that there is no public service-wide accountability mechanism for the language training system, the Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that the deputy heads of each federal institution create a list of indicators, systematically collect data in line with those indicators, and establish a reporting mechanism on language training. These measures should be in place and all federal institutions should be able to report on their language training activities by October 1, 2014.

Language retention

Language retention concerns public servants who have acquired skills in their second language through training to meet the language requirements of a position or for professional development purposes. It also concerns employees who arrive in the public service with a certain level of proficiency in both languages or who are bilingual, but risk losing their second-language skills as a result of not using the language in their work, particularly in writing. In all these cases, learning activities can be made available to these employees to maintain and develop their language skills. Institutions do not lack imagination in creating activities and contexts for using the second language and maintaining these skills.

While the skills retention component of language training competes for funding with mandatory language training, it should continue to see resources allocated to it. However, it is reasonable that an employee's prior commitment to his or her language retention be considered as a criterion in

making funding available. In other words, employers must encourage employee language retention through various means, but employees must also demonstrate their own efforts in this regard. In the context of language training for professional development purposes, responsibility for language retention essentially lies with the employee.

How effective is language training?

Even though this study did not set out to examine the effectiveness of language training, it did solicit perceptions about it.

The first perception concerns language training itself. According to the survey, three quarters of respondents believe that, even if language training enables employees to prepare for a second-language evaluation test, this preparation is not enough to make them feel comfortable using their skills in their work.

The other perception concerns language skills assessment. The true measure of the effectiveness of language training is the language skills assessment test administered by the Public Service Commission of Canada. Even though the goal of this study was not to examine in detail the nature and effectiveness of these language skills assessment tests, it was observed that respondents perceive a difference between the actual second-language skills of their employees and the results of the tests. Given that these views are widely held, this issue merits further attention.

RECOMMENDATION

With language training in the federal public service soon celebrating its 50th anniversary (1964–2014), the Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that the President of the Treasury Board put in place, by October 1, 2014, a panel of independent experts to conduct an in-depth review of the effectiveness of current language training, both in terms of the language skills it produces and the way these skills are evaluated. This review should be undertaken in consultation with the federal institutions that play a key role in this regard (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, Public Service Commission of Canada, Canada School of Public Service, Public Works and Government Services Canada and Canadian Heritage).

Language training tool

Based on the findings in this study and in order to help strengthen the language training system as well as assist institutions in a practical way, the Commissioner is making available, on the Office of the Commissioner's Web site, a new tool called *Effective Language Training Practices: On-line Tool for Federal Institutions*.

APPENDIX I TABLES OF SURVEY RESULTS

Table 4.1
Respondent profile

<i>Category</i>	<i>Number of Respondents</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Please indicate the nature of your institution. (Q.1)</i>		
Department	24	34
Central agency	4	6
Administration or Council	0	0
Tribunal	9	13
Commission or Office of the Commissioner	10	14
Agency	18	26
Other	5	7
Total	70	100
<i>Please indicate where your institution's headquarters are located. (Q.3)</i>		
National Capital Region	61	87
Other regions	9	13
Total	70	100
<i>Please indicate the size of your institution in terms of its total number of employees, expressed as full-time equivalents (FTEs). (Q.2)</i>		
Fewer than 1,000	47	67
1,000 to 4,999	14	20
5,000 to 9,999	3	4
More than 10,000	6	9
Total	70	100

Table 4.2
Language training candidate selection criteria

<i>Are specific criteria used to decide which employees will receive language training for career development purposes? (Q.6) If yes, what are they? (Q.6a) (multiple responses)</i>		
<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>%</i>
Employee expresses an interest in learning the other official language	45	88
Employee has an aptitude for learning languages	11	22
Employee has applied for language training	34	67
Employee has management potential	32	63
Other	24	47
Total number of respondents	51	---

Table 4.3

Types of information about language training received by employees

Are employees given information about language training? (Q.8) If yes, what type of information about language training do employees receive? (Q.8a) (multiple responses)		
Type	Number of Responses	%
General information contained in the new employee orientation kit	36	55
Information on the kinds of language training offered	56	86
Information on retention tools and strategies used in the institution	36	55
Information on how to apply for language training	54	83
Other	17	26
Total number of respondents	65	---

Table 4.4

Persons responsible for disseminating information about language training

Are employees given information about language training? (Q.8) If yes, who provides the information about language training to employees? (Q.8b) (multiple responses)		
Person Responsible	Number of Responses	%
Deputy Minister	3	5
Official Languages Champion	28	43
Human Resources	60	92
Supervisor	44	68
Other	19	29
Total number of respondents	65	---

Table 4.5

Learning methods provided for language training

Which learning methods do employees have access to? (Q.10) (multiple responses)		
Learning Method	Number of Responses	%
On-line training	58	83
Classroom training	62	89
In-house training	48	69
Private lessons	61	87
Part-time training	63	90
Intensive full-time training	51	73
Other	20	29
Total number of respondents	70	--

Table 4.6

Persons responsible for choosing the language training learning methods

Person Responsible	Number of Responses	%
Who is responsible for choosing the learning methods used by employees who are receiving language training to meet the linguistic requirements of their positions? (Q.11) (multiple responses)		
Employee	38	54
Supervisor	49	70
Unit Manager	40	57
Other:	31	44
• Human Resources Unit	(13)	(19)
• Official Languages Unit	(10)	(14)
Total number of respondents	70	---
Who is responsible for choosing the learning methods used by employees who are receiving language training for career development purposes? (Q.12) (multiple responses)		
Employee	47	67
Supervisor	50	71
Unit Manager	42	60
Other:	27	39
• Human Resources Unit	(16)	(23)
Total number of respondents	70	---

Table 4.7

Factors considered in the choice of learning methods

Factor	Number of Responses	%
What factors are considered in choosing the learning methods? (To meet the requirements of a position) (Q.11a) (multiple responses)		
Employee preferences	54	77
Budget	59	84
Workload	62	89
Employee special needs	52	74
Other	20	29
Total number of respondents	70	---
What factors are considered in choosing the learning methods? (For career development purposes) (Q.12a) (multiple responses)		
Employee preferences	54	77
Budget	65	93
Workload	58	83
Employee special needs	50	71
Other	12	17
Total number of respondents	70	---

Table 4.8

Procedure for selecting language training service providers

How are language training service providers chosen? (Q. 14) (multiple responses)		
Procedure	Number of Responses	%
Standing offer with Public Works and Government Services Canada	50	71
Standing offer with your institution	15	21
Competitive process	42	60
Other:	29	41
• Sole source	(17)	(24)
Total number of respondents	70	---

Table 4.9

Criteria used in selecting language training service providers

Which criteria are used in selecting service providers? (Q. 14a) (multiple responses)		
Criteria	Number of Responses	%
Cost of service	62	89
Service provider's reputation for quality	51	73
Whether the service provider is pre-qualified by the Canada School of Public Service	30	43
Other	24	34
Total number of respondents	70	---

Table 4.10

Employee language retention strategies

Are strategies used to help employees retain what they have learned in their language training? (Q. 17)		
If yes, what are these strategies? (Q. 17a) (multiple responses)		
Strategy	Number of Responses	%
Informal training sessions in the workplace	23	40
Employees are paired up so they can practise their second language	26	45
English/French days	24	41
Bilingual meetings	55	95
Language activities (English/French lunch)	27	47
Reminder from management about language training and retention services available on-line	32	55
Other	26	45
Total number of respondents	58	---

Table 4.11

Agreement or disagreement with certain statements

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements. (Q.15, Q.18, Q.21)				
Statement	Somewhat Agree and Completely Agree	Somewhat Disagree and Completely Disagree	Do Not Know	Total
Access to language training providers meets our needs. (Q.15)	61 (88%)	7 (10%)	2 (3%)	70
Language training services meet training objectives. (Q.15)	60 (85%)	4 (6%)	6 (9%)	70
In my experience, language training prepares employees to pass the test but is not sufficient for them to be comfortable using the acquired skills at work. (Q.15)	52 (74%)	15 (22%)	3 (4%)	70
Language training services offer good value for the money spent. (Q.15)	57 (81%)	8 (11%)	5 (7%)	70
In my experience, there are employees who can communicate effectively in their second official language but have difficulty passing the test. (Q.18)	53 (76%)	9 (12%)	8 (11%)	70
In my opinion, there are useful tools available in my institution to help employees retain what they have learned in their language training. (Q.18)	57 (82%)	13 (19%)	0 (0%)	70
In my opinion, the majority of employees in my institution are successful in maintaining proficiency in their second official language. (Q.18)	51 (73%)	14 (20%)	5 (7%)	70
Language training budgets in my institution are sufficient to meet needs. (Q.21)	41 (77%)	8 (15%)	4 (8%)	53

Table 4.12

Trends observed regarding the proportion of the overall budget allocated to language training

Statement	Decreased	Stayed the Same	Increased	Do Not Know	Total
What trends have you observed since 2006 with regard to the proportion of your institution's overall budget allocated for language training? (Q.22)					
The proportion allocated for language training given to ensure that employees meet the linguistic requirements of their position has:	13 (25%)	24 (45%)	9 (17%)	7 (13%)	53
The proportion allocated for language training given for career development purposes has:	13 (25%)	21 (40%)	13 (25%)	6 (11%)	53
What trends have you observed since the 2011 strategic and operational review with regard to the proportion of your institution's overall budget allocated for language training? (Q.23)					
The proportion allocated for language training given to ensure that employees meet the linguistic requirements of their position has:	10 (19%)	30 (57%)	4 (8%)	9 (17%)	53
The proportion allocated for language training given for career development purposes has:	16 (30%)	25 (47%)	3 (6%)	9 (17%)	53

Table 4.13

Type of data collected concerning language training

Since the decentralization of responsibility for language training in 2006, has your institution been keeping a record of the language training received by your employees? (Q.24) If yes, do you keep data on: (Q.24a) (multiple responses)		
Type of Data	Number of Responses	%
The number of employees who received language training	50	85
The total number of training sessions taken	30	51
The number of training sessions per employee	26	44
The number of hours in language training per employee	38	64
The number of training sessions taken to meet the linguistic requirements of positions	22	37
The number of training sessions taken for the purposes of career development	20	34
The number of training sessions taken, by learning method	17	29
Other	14	24
Total number of respondents	59	---

APPENDIX II SECOND OFFICIAL LANGUAGE QUALIFICATIONS

Table 4.14
Summary of the types and levels of general second official languages qualifications, according to the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's standards

Type of Qualification	Proficiency Level		
	A	B	C
Written Comprehension	<p>Level A is the minimum level of second language ability in written comprehension for positions that require comprehension of texts on topics of limited scope.</p> <p>A person reading at this level can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fully understand very simple texts; • grasp the main idea of texts about familiar topics; and • read and understand elementary points of information such as dates, numbers, or names from relatively more complex texts to perform routine job-related tasks. <p>A person at this level would not be expected to read and understand detailed information.</p>	<p>Level B is the minimum level of second language ability in written comprehension for positions that require comprehension of most descriptive or factual material on work-related topics.</p> <p>A person reading at this level can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grasp the main idea of most work-related texts; • identify specific details; and • distinguish main from subsidiary ideas. <p>A person at this level will have difficulty reading texts using complex grammar and less common vocabulary.</p>	<p>Level C is the level of second language ability in written comprehension for positions that require comprehension of texts dealing with a wide variety of work-related topics.</p> <p>A person reading at this level can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand most complex details, inferences and fine points of meaning; and • have a good comprehension of specialized or less familiar material. <p>A person at this level may miss some seldom-used expressions and have some difficulty with very complex grammatical structures.</p>
	Written Expression	<p>Level A is the minimum level of second language ability in written expression for positions that require writing simple units of information in the second language.</p> <p>A person writing at this level can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • write isolated words, phrases, simple statements or questions on very familiar topics using words of time, place or person. <p>A person at this level is expected to make errors of grammar, vocabulary and spelling. These errors are acceptable as long as the message is understandable.</p>	<p>Level B is the minimum level of second language ability in written expression for positions that require writing short descriptive or factual texts in the second language.</p> <p>A person writing at this level can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deal with explicit information on work-related topics since they have sufficient mastery of grammar and vocabulary. <p>A person at this level will communicate the basic information, but the text will require some corrections in grammar and vocabulary as well as revision for style.</p>

Type of Qualification	Proficiency Level		
	A	B	C
Oral Proficiency	<p>Level A is the minimum level of second language ability in oral proficiency for positions that require simple and repetitive use of the second language in routine work situations.</p> <p>A person speaking at this level can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ask and answer simple questions; give simple instructions; give uncomplicated directions relating to routine work situations. <p>Persons at this level make many errors and have deficiencies in grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary and fluency, which may interfere with the clarity of the message. Since they may have problems understanding speech spoken at a normal rate, repetitions by others may be required for them to understand what is being said.</p>	<p>Level B is the minimum level of second language oral proficiency for positions that require departure from routine use of the second language.</p> <p>A person speaking at this level can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sustain a conversation on concrete topics; report on actions taken; give straightforward instructions to employees; provide factual descriptions and explanations. <p>A person at this level may have deficiencies in grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary and fluency that do not seriously interfere with communication.</p> <p>A person at this level would have a limited ability to deal with situations involving hypothetical ideas.</p> <p>A person at this level should not be expected to cope with situations that are sensitive or that require the understanding or expression of subtle or abstract ideas.</p>	<p>Level C is the level of second language oral proficiency for positions that require handling and sensitive situations where the understanding and expression of subtle, abstract, or complicated ideas are required or where unfamiliar work-related topics must be dealt with.</p> <p>A person speaking at this level can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> support opinions; and understand and express hypothetical and conditional ideas. <p>A person at this level will not have the ease and fluency of a native speaker and may have deficiencies in pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. These deficiencies rarely interfere with communication.</p>

Source: *Qualification Standards in Relation to Official Languages*: www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/gui/squn03-eng.asp

APPENDIX III STUDY INSTRUMENTS

Questionnaires for exploratory interviews conducted with key federal institutions

- A. Questionnaire – Canada School of Public Service (CSPS)
- B. Questionnaire – Human Resources Council (HRC)
- C. Questionnaire – Language Industry Association (AILIA)
- D. Questionnaire – Public Service Commission of Canada (PSC)
- E. Questionnaire – Telephone Interviews – Regional Perspectives

Questionnaire for in-depth interviews conducted with a number of federal institutions

Questionnaire for Interviews with Federal Institutions

Survey sent to deputy heads in the federal public service

Survey on Language Training in the Federal Public Service

A. QUESTIONNAIRE – CANADA SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE (CSPS)

For each of the following questions, where possible, provide an answer for each of the official languages targeted in training:

1. What roles does the CSPS play in the federal language training system?
2. What accreditation criteria does the CSPS use for language training suppliers?
3. How does the CSPS control the quality of the services provided by the suppliers? How often are these suppliers evaluated? What criteria are used?
4. Are there schools that lose their accreditation? If so, for what reasons?
5. What are the approaches, programs and strategies or teaching methods prescribed or recommended to suppliers?
6. What has changed over the last 10 years with regard to language training approaches, programs and strategies or methods?
7. Does the CSPS keep a log of training that suppliers deliver (hours of training, types of training, etc.)?
8. Is the CSPS able to evaluate the language learning outcomes achieved?
9. What are the effects that you notice, or have had reported to you, that stem from the decentralization of responsibility for language training toward deputy heads of federal institutions?

B. QUESTIONNAIRE – HUMAN RESOURCES COUNCIL (HRC)

For each of the following questions, where possible, provide an answer for each of the official languages targeted in training:

1. What is the HRC's mandate?
2. With this mandate in mind, does the HRC provide cross-cutting strategic support to members and federal institutions with regard to language training?
3. What have you observed with regard to the information provided to public service employees concerning language training, particularly new recruits? Is it systematically disseminated?
4. Have there been changes in the last 10 years regarding creating linguistic profiles (levels) for proficiency (C, B, E) in staffing processes? If so, do you note any particular trend?
5. What do you know about the evolution of employees' results on these evaluations in the last 10 years or so?
6. What are the effects that you notice or that have been reported to you, stemming from the decentralization of responsibility for language training toward deputy heads of federal institutions?
7. Based on your observations, what importance was placed on language training during the 2011 Strategic and Operating Review?

C. QUESTIONNAIRE – LANGUAGE INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION (AILIA)

For each of the following questions, where possible, provide an answer for each of the official languages targeted in training:

1. What is AILIA's mission and how do you connect this mission to language training in federal institutions?
2. What is AILIA's role with respect to its members?
3. How are your members accredited by the Canada School of Public Service (CSPS) and what are the criteria used? Are you satisfied with this approach?
4. What role do your members play in the development of language training approaches, programs, strategies and methods?
5. What has changed over the last 10 years with regard to language training approaches, programs and strategies or methods?
6. What added value do your members bring to the federal language training system?
7. How do you see the evolution of language training policy and measures in the federal public service?

D. QUESTIONNAIRE – PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF CANADA (PSC)

For each of the following questions, where possible, provide an answer for each of the official languages targeted in training:

1. What roles does the PSC play in the federal language training system? How do staffing processes and second language evaluations affect the federal language training system?
2. What is the nature and frequency of the information provided to public service employees concerning language training, particularly new recruits?
3. Have there been changes in the last 10 years regarding the creation of linguistic profiles (levels) for proficiency (C, B, E) in staffing processes? If so, do you note any particular trend?
4. What are the changes that have occurred in the last 10 years in the methods for evaluating language proficiency (content of tests and evaluation tools)? What accounts for these changes?
5. What do you know about the evolution of employees' results on these evaluations in the last 10 years or so? Can lessons be drawn from how these results have evolved? Do you document candidates' language training history (e.g., training received) in the evaluations? If so, do you note any correlations?
6. How does the PSC administer proficiency evaluations to the employees that need them? Do the assigned personnel (evaluators) receive training to do this? Are evaluators evaluated on their competence? If there is sub-contracting, how can compliance to standards be ensured? Are the sub-contractors evaluated?
7. Are PSC's public service staffing audits able to identify irregularities in language criteria, such as individuals who choose to be evaluated in their mother tongue as their second language?
8. What are the effects that you notice, or have had reported to you, that stem from the decentralization of responsibility for language training toward deputy heads of federal institutions?

E. QUESTIONNAIRE – TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS – REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

The following interview is part of a descriptive study commissioned by the Commissioner of Official Languages to examine language training in federal institutions. The study involves documenting current processes and practices, as well as the challenges involved in language training. It also includes interviews with key people in the field of language training, interviews with selected federal institutions that have had relevant experience, and an on-line survey of all federal institutions.

The interviews will be conducted by the Universalia consulting firm on behalf of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages. Participation in the study is voluntary, and all responses will be kept confidential. Respondents may choose not to answer certain questions and may terminate the interview at any time.

1. Since the responsibility for language training was decentralized in 2006, has there been any change in the way federal institutions in the regions offer language training? If so, how has it changed?
2. How has the role of the Canada School of Public Service (CSPS) changed in the regions since the responsibility for language training was decentralized?
3. What impact have these changes had?
4. In your opinion, what are the main challenges for federal institutions in the regions when it comes to language training?
5. Do you have any suggestions as to how these challenges could be addressed?
6. Do you have any other comments?

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR INTERVIEWS WITH FEDERAL INSTITUTIONS

The following interview is part of a descriptive study commissioned by the Commissioner of Official Languages to examine language training in federal institutions. The study involves documenting current processes and practices, as well as the challenges involved in language training. It includes interviews with key people in the field of language training, interviews with selected federal institutions that have had relevant experience, and an on-line survey of all federal institutions.

The interviews will be conducted by the Universalia consulting firm on behalf of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages. Participation in the study is voluntary, and all responses will be kept confidential. Respondents may choose not to answer certain questions and may terminate the interview at any time.

Language training needs

1. How are language training needs determined within your institution? Do the regions and head office use the same process?
2. Are specific criteria used to choose which employees will receive language training? If so, what are they?
3. Are second-language learning aptitude tests administered to employees eligible for language training in your institution? If so,
 - a) In what cases are these tests administered?
 - b) How are the results used?
4. Is language training incorporated into employee training programs? If so, how?
5. Are employees given information about language training? If so, what kind of information?
 - a) Are new employees given specific information? If so, what information?
 - b) Do the regions and head office use the same process to provide information to employees?
6. Do the regional offices have specific needs in terms of language training? If so, what are they?

Language training provided

7. What learning methods do employees have access to?
8. Who is responsible for choosing the learning methods employees can use? What factors are considered?
9. Can employees in your institution take their language training during work hours without having to make up the time?
10. How are language-training service providers chosen? What criteria are used in selecting service providers?

Language skills and retention

11. Do employees who are taking or have taken language training receive support or guidance to encourage them to use their second language on the job? If so, what type of support or guidance is provided?
12. Have any strategies been implemented to help employees retain their language skills following their language training?

Language training budget

13. Have you been keeping data on the budget for language training in your institution since the responsibility for language training was transferred to senior administrative officers of federal institutions in 2006? If so, do the data reflect the cost of:
 - service providers?
 - replacements for employees on training?
 - salaries of employees on training?
 - other?
14. What trends have you observed since 2006 regarding the proportion of your overall budget allocated for language training? Has the percentage decreased, increased or stayed the same?
15. Was your language training budget affected by the 2011 strategic and operational review or by the recent government cutbacks? If so, how? Has there been any particular impact in the regions?
16. Do you have any financial data to share with us?

Decentralization of responsibility and data collection

17. Has there been any positive or negative impact in your institution following the 2006 decentralization of responsibility for language training?
18. Since 2006, has your institution been keeping a record of the language training received by your employees (e.g., number of employees, hours of training, type of language training)? If so,
 - a) Is this data gathered systematically?
 - b) How far back does the data go?
 - c) May we have access to the data?

Conclusion

19. Do you have any other comments about language training in your institution?

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

SURVEY ON LANGUAGE TRAINING IN THE FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE

INTRODUCTION

The following survey is part of a descriptive study commissioned by the Commissioner of Official Languages to examine language training in federal institutions. The study involves documenting current processes and practices, as well as the challenges involved in language training. Participation in the study is voluntary, and all responses will be kept strictly confidential. No federal institutions will be identifiable in any data analyses. You may alternate between the English and French versions of the survey by clicking on the “English” or “French” button at the top right corner of each page, and then clicking on the “Go” or “Aller” button. To move forward or backward in the survey, click on “Next” or “Previous” at the bottom left corner of each page. At the end of each section of the questionnaire, space is provided to allow you to make any additional comments should you wish to do so. For more information on this survey, please write to: information.information@ocol-clo.gc.ca. The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages thanks you.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSTITUTION

Question 1.

Please indicate the nature of your institution.

- Department
- Central agency
- Administration or Council
- Tribunal
- Commission
- Agency
- Other, please specify: _____

Question 2.

Please indicate the size of your institution in terms of its total number of employees, expressed as full-time equivalents (FTEs).

- Fewer than 1,000
- 1,000 to 4,999
- 5,000 to 9,999
- More than 10,000

Question 3.

Please indicate where your institution's headquarters are located.

- National Capital Region (NCR)
- Atlantic Region (NB, NS, PEI, NL)
- Ontario (excluding the NCR)
- Central Canada (SK, MB)
- Western Region (BC, AB)
- Quebec (excluding the NCR)
- Northern Canada (NU, NWT, YK)

Question 4.

In which region(s) are your regional offices located? (Please check all applicable responses.)

- National Capital Region (NCR)
- Atlantic Region (NB, NS, PEI, NL)
- Ontario (excluding the NCR)
- Central Canada (SK, MB)
- Western Region (BC, AB)
- Quebec (excluding the NCR)
- Northern Canada (NU, NWT, YK)
- Not applicable

If you would like to add other comments with respect to your institution, please use the space below:

LANGUAGE TRAINING NEEDS

Question 5.

How are language training needs determined within your institution? (Please check all applicable responses.)

- Based on the obligation that employees meet the linguistic requirements of their position
- According to operational requirements
- Based on employees' wishes to take language training for career development
- According to employee training plans
- Other, please specify: _____

Question 6.

Are specific criteria used to decide which employees will receive language training for career development purposes?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

Question 6a.

What are the criteria used to decide which employees will receive language training for career development purposes? (Please check all applicable responses.)

- Employee expresses an interest in learning the other official language
- Employee has an aptitude for learning languages
- Employee has applied for language training
- Employee has management potential
- Other, please specify: _____

Question 7.

Is language training an integral part of employee career development programs?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

Question 8.

Are employees given information about language training?

- Yes
- No

Question 8a.

What type of information about language training do employees receive? (Please check all applicable responses.)

- General information contained in the new employee orientation kit
- Information on the kinds of language training offered
- Information on retention tools and strategies used in the institution
- Information on how to apply for language training
- Other, please specify: _____

Question 8b.

Who provides the information about language training to employees? (Please check all applicable responses.)

- The deputy minister
- The official languages champion
- Human Resources
- The supervisor
- Other, please specify: _____

Question 8c.

Do the regions and Headquarters use the same process to disseminate information to employees?

- Yes
- No, please explain: _____
- Not applicable

If you would like to add other comments with respect to your institution's language training needs, please use the space below:

LANGUAGE TRAINING PROVIDED

Question 9.

Does your institution have a language training directive in place?

- Yes
- No

Question 9a.

Since what year does your institution have a language training directive in place?

Question 9b.

Have guidelines been developed for this directive?

- Yes
- No

Question 10.

Which learning methods do employees have access to? (Please check all applicable responses.)

- On-line training
- Classroom training
- In-house training
- Private lessons
- Part-time training
- Intensive full-time training
- Other, please specify: _____

Question 11.

Who is responsible for choosing the learning methods used by employees who are receiving language training to meet the linguistic requirements of their positions? (Please check all applicable responses.)

- Employee
- Supervisor
- Unit Manager
- Other, please specify: _____

Question 11a.

What factors are considered in choosing the learning methods? (Please check all applicable responses.)

- Employee preferences
- Budget
- Workload
- Employee special needs
- Other, please specify: _____

Question 12.

Who is responsible for choosing the learning methods used by employees who are receiving language training for career development purposes? (Please check all applicable responses.)

- Employee
- Supervisor
- Unit Manager
- Other, please specify: _____
- Not applicable

Question 12a.

If you offer language training for career development purposes, what factors are considered in choosing the learning methods? (Please check all applicable responses.)

- Employee preferences
- Budget
- Workload
- Employee special needs
- Other, please specify: _____
- Not applicable

Question 13.

In your institution, can employees:

	Yes	No	Varies according to the manager	Do not know
Take language training during work hours without having to make up the time?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Take other types of job-related training during work hours without having to make up the time?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Question 14.

How are language training service providers chosen? (Please check all applicable responses.)

- Standing offer with Public Works and Government Services Canada
- Standing offer with your institution
- Competitive process
- Other, please specify: _____

Question 14a.

Which criteria are used in selecting service providers? (Please check all applicable responses.)

- Cost of service
- Service provider's reputation for quality
- Whether the service provider is pre-qualified by the Canada School of Public Service
- Other, please specify: _____

Question 15.

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Completely agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Completely disagree	Do not know
Access to language training providers meets our needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Language training services meet training objectives.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In my experience, language training prepares employees to pass the test but is not sufficient for them to be comfortable using the acquired skills at work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Language training services offer good value for the money spent.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you would like to add other comments with respect to language training provided, please use the space below:

LANGUAGE SKILLS AND RETENTION

Question 16.

Do employees in language training generally receive the following types of encouragement?

- They are encouraged to seek opportunities to use their second language in performing their duties.
 - Yes, during language training only
 - Yes, after language training only
 - Yes, both during and after language training
 - No
 - Do not know

- They are encouraged to hold and/or participate actively in meetings in both official languages.
 - Yes, during language training only
 - Yes, after language training only
 - Yes, both during and after language training
 - No
 - Do not know

- To encourage second language retention, management creates opportunities for communication in both official languages.
 - Yes, during language training only
 - Yes, after language training only
 - Yes, both during and after language training
 - No
 - Do not know

Question 17.

Are strategies used to help employees retain what they have learned in their language training?

- Yes
- No

Question 17a.

What are the strategies used to help employees retain what they have learned in their language training?
(Please check all applicable responses.)

- Informal training sessions in the workplace
- Employees are paired up so they can practise their second language
- English/French days
- Bilingual meetings
- Language activities (English/French lunch)
- Reminder from management about language training and retention services available on-line
- Other, please specify: _____

Question 18.

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Completely agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Completely disagree	Do not know
In my experience, there are employees who can communicate effectively in their second official language but have difficulty passing the test.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In my opinion, there are useful tools available in my institution to help employees retain what they have learned in their language training.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In my opinion, the majority of employees in my institution are successful in maintaining proficiency in their second official language.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you would like to add other comments with respect to employees' language skills and retention, please use the space below:

DATA COLLECTION AND MANAGEMENT

Question 19.

Does your institution have budgets for language training?

- Yes
- No

Question 20.

Have you been keeping data on budgets for language training in your institution since the responsibility for language training was transferred to senior administrative officers of federal institutions in 2006?

- Yes
- No

Question 20a.

Is the data on language training budgets in your institution gathered on: (Please check all applicable responses.)

- costs related to service providers?
- costs related to the replacement of employees in training?
- costs related to the salaries of employees in training?
- Other, please specify: _____

Question 20b.

If the Office of the Commissioner conducts a subsequent study, would you be inclined to share this data?

- Yes
- No

Question 21.

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement:
Language training budgets in my institution are sufficient to meet needs.

- Completely agree
- Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Completely disagree
- Do not know

Question 22.

What trends have you observed since 2006 with regard to the proportion of your institution’s overall budget allocated for language training?

	Decreased	Stayed the same	Increased	Do not know
The proportion allocated for language training given to ensure that employees meet the linguistic requirements of their position has:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The proportion allocated for language training given for career development purposes has:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Question 23.

What trends have you observed since the 2011 strategic and operational review with regard to the proportion of your institution’s overall budget allocated for language training?

	Decreased	Stayed the same	Increased	Do not know
The proportion allocated for language training given to ensure that employees meet the linguistic requirements of their position has:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The proportion allocated for language training given for career development purposes has:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Question 24.

Since the decentralization of responsibility for language training in 2006, has your institution been keeping a record of the language training received by your employees?

- Yes
- No

Question 24a.

Do you keep data on: (Please check all applicable responses.)

- the number of employees who received language training?
- the total number of training sessions taken?
- the number of training sessions per employee?
- the number of hours in language training per employee?
- the number of training sessions taken to meet the linguistic requirements of positions?
- the number of training sessions taken for the purposes of career development?
- the number of training sessions taken, by learning method?
- Other, please specify: _____

Question 24b.

Is the data on the language training received by your employees gathered systematically?

- Yes
- No

Question 24c.

In what year did you start collecting the data?

Question 24d.

If the Office of the Commissioner conducts a subsequent study, would you be inclined to share this data?

- Yes
- No

Question 25.

Does your institution have staff dedicated to managing language training?

- Yes
- No

Question 25a.

Since what year does your institution have staff dedicated to managing language training?

Question 25b.

How many employees, expressed as full-time equivalents (FTEs), are dedicated to managing language training?

Question 26.

Do you have anything you would like to add, or any challenges or best practices you would like to share?