



Official Languages Champions

Strategic Activities Guide

Role of the Champion

The champion's role is to increase the visibility of official languages in their institution and to support the deputy head in ensuring that the institution respects the government's official languages commitments and obligations in regard to the following:

- service to the public;
- language of work;
- equitable participation of English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians;
- support for the development of the official language minority communities.

Champions work within each institution in the area of strategic management. All are called upon to exercise leadership, particularly with their colleagues on the senior management committee, to ensure that official languages are at the heart of decision making. They facilitate achievement of the official languages objectives, relying on a values-based approach aimed at excellence.

Networks of the Champions

Some 200 institutions are subject to the *Official Languages Act*. In 1998, the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat asked deputy heads to appoint official languages champions in their organizations. This resulted in the creation of two networks of official languages champions – one comprised of departmental champions and one of Crown corporations and other institutions. In August 2003, the departmental champions established the Council of the Network of Departmental Official Languages Champions made up of more than twenty members; its mandate is to promote official languages by acting as an agent of change.

The Official Languages Branch of the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada consults the champions' networks on official languages issues and strategic directions. An annual conference for each network is held in different regions to help the champions learn more about the issues and needs of the official language minority communities. In addition, a number of meetings such as retreats, information sessions, and working or consultation breakfasts are held each year to advance the Official Languages Program (the Program).

Strategic Activities in Support of the Program

Maximize the Use of Official Languages

Integrate official languages into the heart of decision making by

- ensuring that the institution's strategic planning process includes all aspects of the Program;
- ensuring that the service standards respect the institution's commitment to provide quality services in both official languages, where required;
- ensuring that official languages internal audits and program evaluation activities take the objectives of the Program into consideration;
- ensuring that the institution's policies take official languages into account;
- ensuring that initiatives are analyzed for their impact on official languages objectives;
- promoting consultation of the official language minority communities;
- incorporating data on the management of the Program in the information systems.

Support the Program

Ensure that the Program is implemented in the institution by

- overseeing the preparation of an action plan and a progress report on the achievement of official languages objectives;
- making sure that the institution has an organizational structure that enables effective management of the Program;
- seeing, if needed, to the implementation of a network to ensure the achievement of the official languages objectives;
- encouraging the distribution of tools that explain official languages policies;
- encouraging the inclusion of official languages objectives in the performance evaluation of managers;
- proposing appropriate measures to ensure that the work environment is conducive to the use of both official languages in designated bilingual regions;
- supporting the person responsible for official languages in awareness activities for employees (e.g. orientation sessions, language training and retention activities).

Promote Official Languages

Demonstrate the institution's commitment to linguistic duality by

- using both official languages at the senior management committee meetings and in all meetings conducted in designated bilingual regions;
- integrating official languages into special events;
- ensuring that the institution's annual report on official languages is discussed by the senior management committee and shared with employees via the intranet;
- including official languages in the institution's merit award program;
- informing the deputy head on a regular basis with respect to the official languages activities within the institution, the champions' network and central agencies.