

# Summary of the Evaluation of Interdepartmental Coordination in relation to section 42 of the *Official Languages Act*

(2013-14 to 2017-18)

## Profile of the coordination function

Under section 42 of the Act, the Minister of Canadian Heritage encourages and promotes interdepartmental coordination of the federal government's commitment to:

- enhance the vitality of the English and French minorities in Canada and support their development;
- foster the full recognition and use of English and French in Canadian Society.

This mandate is given to the Interdepartmental Relations and Accountability Directorate (IRAD) and to section 42 coordinators in the 5 PCH administrative regions. Together, IRAD and the section 42 coordinators make up the PCH network of coordinators (Network 42).

## Interdepartmental coordination Mechanisms

Network 42 creates opportunities for dialogue and promotes the development of ties between federal institutions and official language minority communities (OLMC).

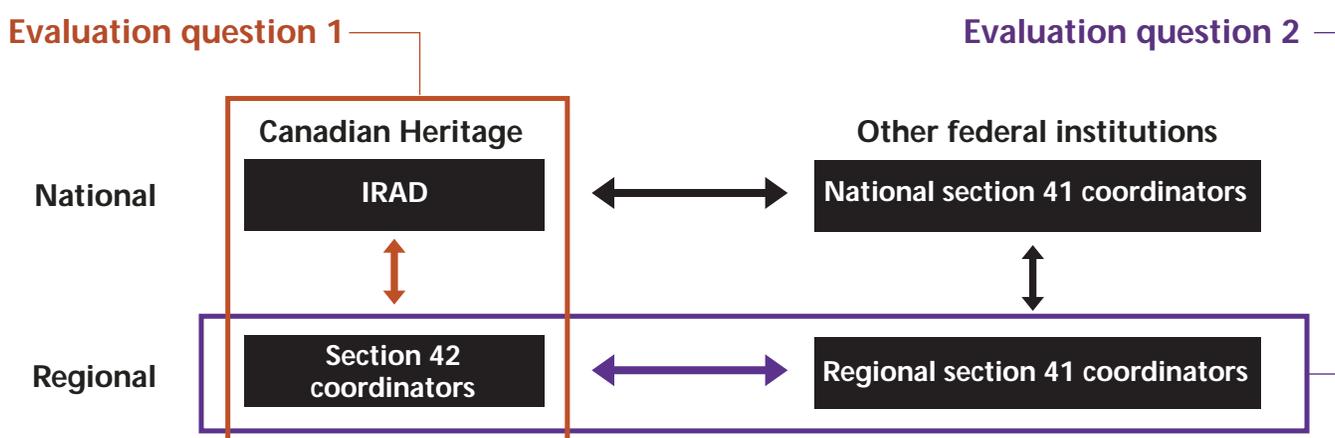
IRAD and section 42 coordinators oversee, equip and support section 41 coordinators at federal institutions, nationally and in the regions. In addition, it participates in communities of practice and coordinates or chairs a wide range of consultation mechanisms.

## Main OL interdepartmental coordination mechanisms by region



## Evaluation scope

The evaluation examined the **effectiveness** of the interdepartmental coordination mechanisms, particularly the work done by and with PCH regional offices. The objective was to identify strengths, challenges, needs, possible improvements and the individual characteristics of interdepartmental coordination mechanisms with and within PCH regional offices.



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## 1) The mechanisms for coordination between IRAD and the regional section 42 coordinators were effective but could be strengthened.

### Strengths



Meetings help develop a **sense of belonging**, ensure the **coordination of actions, exchanges and updates**.



Most section 42 coordinators and IRAD members indicated that they were **satisfied with Network 42**.

The frequency of face-to-face meetings was stable, and the **participation rate was high**:

**82%**

for meetings via teleconference or WebEx;

**100%**

for face-to-face meetings;



for the bilateral meetings, most section 42 coordinators who mentioned these meetings indicated that they were happy that these meetings had been reinstated (2018).

### Challenges, needs and areas for improvement

**Asymmetry and variations in the coordination function** from one region to another:

- Roles and responsibilities of section 42 coordinators;
- Time and resources dedicated to coordination;
- Structure of interdepartmental coordination mechanisms;
- Context and challenges specific to each region.

**Limited influence** of section 42 coordinators:

- Mainly program officers who assume the coordination role part-time and who must rely on support from PCH senior management to raise awareness and mobilize federal institutions.

**Better tell the story** of interdepartmental coordination:

- Better disseminate results and impacts of activities.

Need to **increase proactive sharing of information** between headquarter and the regions.

Develop **tools** for section 42 coordinators in their interdepartmental coordination work.

Need to **strengthen training** for section 42 coordinators:

- More formal and systematic approach would better support and equip them.

## 2) Mechanisms for interdepartmental coordination in the regions were effective even if needs, challenges and areas for improvement were identified.

### Strengths

Generally seen as **good platforms for sharing information and best practices**; help to **encourage members to organize or take part in other activities or events** related to official languages.

A survey of regional section 41 coordinators showed that respondents were satisfied with the interdepartmental coordination:

**69%** agreed that these interdepartmental coordination mechanisms in the regions were **effective**;

**75%** agreed that the interdepartmental coordination mechanism in their region **fostered collaboration among federal institutions** to implement the commitments set out in section 41 of the Act;

**70%** agreed that the interdepartmental coordination mechanism in their region **made it easier to establish ties between federal institutions and OLMC** at the provincial/territorial level;

**88%** said that **their needs were considered** by the interdepartmental coordination mechanism in their region.

### Challenges, needs and areas for improvement

The potential for interdepartmental coordination is constrained by:

- **A lack of support, commitment and awareness among senior management** at some federal institutions regarding Part VII of the Act;
- **A high turnover rate among section 41 coordinators** as well as a **lack of communication and information sharing** between national and regional section 41 coordinators at some federal institutions;
- **A lack of understanding of the roles and responsibilities of section 41 coordinators** at some federal institutions.
- **Have more tools related to Part VII of the Act** to be able to share them with the regional section 41 coordinators. Up-to-date tools providing concrete examples and adapted to the reality of each region.

### Recommendations

The evaluation recommends that the Assistant Deputy Minister, Official Languages, Heritage and Region:

**1** Implement concrete actions to **strengthen interdepartmental coordination in the regions and to increase awareness among regional senior management of federal institutions** about their roles and responsibilities regarding Part VII of the Act.

**2** Conduct an exercise to **develop measurable expected results to better tell the story of the results** of the work carried out by Network 42 members and to show their impact over the years.

**3** **Equip and provide training to section 42 coordinators** to better support them in their work.