



Canadian Heritage's Interdepartmental Coordination Network (Network 42)

Guide for section 42 officers at Canadian Heritage

Under section 41 of the *Official Languages Act* (OLA), the Government of Canada is committed to enhancing the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada and supporting and assisting their development, and fostering the full recognition and use of both English and French in Canadian society.

Section 42 of the OLA mandates Canadian Heritage (PCH) to coordinate the implementation of section 41.

Network 42

PCH's Interdepartmental Coordination Network (Network 42) comprises the Interdepartmental Relations and Accountability Directorate at national headquarters, section 42 coordinators representing each of Canadian Heritage's five administrative regions, as well as official languages managers.

Network 42 creates opportunities for dialogue and fosters connections between federal institutions and official language minority communities (OLMCs). PCH coaches, equips and supports section 41 coordinators in federal institutions, both nationally and regionally. It also participates in communities of practice and coordinates or chairs a wide array of coordination mechanisms.

Network 42 developed an Interdepartmental Strategy 2021–2024 and a three-year work plan establishing priorities for each year. This approach will enable Network 42 to establish common directions that will assist in building regional work plans and maximize its impact with respect to official languages.

Capacities of interdepartmental coordinators

Know what is happening in official languages across government, in federal institutions, in areas of action and in OLMCS – **liaison officer**

- Be the organization's eyes and ears to stay on top of what's happening in the region or sector
- Know the mandate of federal institutions that are likely to contribute to the development of OLMCS, as well as the organizational structure and culture of federal departments and agencies
- Know the official languages stakeholders (regional or national section 41 coordinators, as applicable) and take part in PCH's Interdepartmental Coordination Network

Effectively communicate all current and relevant information to federal partners and OLMCS – **information officer**

- Be familiar with all available resources to help federal institutions communicate and develop tools and programs to meet OLMC priorities (OLMC profiles, OLMC research and studies, PCH's and other federal institutions' programs and services)

Facilitate positive and lasting working relationships among federal institutions, various areas of action and OLMCS – **public relations officer**

- Build relationships, maintain an active network and continue to work with section 41 coordinators of federal departments and agencies to facilitate OLMCS' access to their programs and services
- Know and leverage the interdepartmental coordination mechanisms in place to raise awareness and facilitate networking

Advise and influence federal institutions and various areas of action on measures to implement section 41 – **consultant**

- Make informed suggestions and realistic recommendations to achieve concrete results
- Listen attentively to government partners to better guide the development of appropriate and relevant actions in the short, medium and long term
- Educate, train and support section 41 coordinators (in their province, territory, sector)

Create and innovate in methods to help implement section 41 – **change agent**

- Build positive and lasting work relationships with various federal institutions
- Working with federal institutions, seek ways to contribute to the promotion of linguistic diversity and development of OLMCS
- Use a variety of platforms to promote partnership work, for example, by participating in working groups, interdepartmental committees, advisory committees, official languages committees of federal councils, or other activities with OLMCS, etc.

Network 42's priorities for 2021–2024

Build more coordinated and closer connections between PCH (national and regions) and other federal institutions

Objective: A common and uniform understanding of interdepartmental coordination is shared regionally and nationally, contributing to Network 42's greater effectiveness.

Increase awareness, accountability and mobilization of senior management at PCH and in other federal institutions

Objective: Federal institutions are informed of communities' priorities and issues, are made aware of the diversity of those communities, are better equipped to implement section 41, and recognize the important role they can play to support OLMCs and advance English and French in Canadian society.

Strengthen collaboration and coordination between OLMCs and federal institutions

Objective: New collaborations and partnerships are established between federal institutions and OLMCs, nationally and regionally.

Network 42's Interdepartmental Strategy

The 2021–2024 Strategy has several objectives, including conveying Network 42's mandate and vision and the nature of its actions supporting section 42 of the *Official Languages Act* (OLA). It also aims to develop a common vision of interdepartmental coordination that will result in ongoing collaboration between PCH and federal institutions both nationally and regionally. By defining priority focus areas for Network 42, the Strategy aims to make federal institutions accountable and mobilize them to take concrete measures and demonstrate results to meet OLMC needs and priorities and advance both official languages.

Lastly, the Strategy seeks to strengthen the implementation of the OLA in federal institutions by systematically applying the official languages lens in developing and delivering policies and programs. The Strategy's focus areas (awareness, partnership, leadership and continuous improvement) were identified to address current issues, and guided the development of Network 42's 2021–2024 work plan.

Awareness

Given Canadian Heritage's mandate under the OLA to "encourage and promote" the implementation of the federal commitments set out in section 41, awareness is Network 42's primary purpose. Be it through coordinating official languages networks at national headquarters and in the regions, holding information sessions in institutions, organizing events or regularly communicating timely information, Network 42 works continuously to ensure that federal institutions are well aware of their section 41 obligations, while providing them with means to support them in implementing section 41.

Examples (2020–2021):

- Virtual presentations on official languages were made to several federal institutions. Specifically, topics like OLA modernization, leadership across Canada and Mauril were discussed. (Priorities **1** and **2**)
- In the regions, federal institutions are educated on Part VII responsibilities and the advancement of official languages primarily through interdepartmental networks or presentations to federal councils. Some regions, as well as national headquarters, have played a support role with official languages champions to educate leadership networks on the advancement of official languages. (Priority **2**)

Partnership

To fulfil its mandate under the OLA both nationally and regionally, Network 42 works with federal institutions and community groups and ensures coordination of interdepartmental and intersectoral working groups, while taking part in different networks. Coordination mechanisms and networking allow for sharing of tools and best practices with and among federal institutions and help maintain partnerships or give rise to new ones.

Examples (2020–2021):

- In Atlantic, ATL Network 41 encourages dialogue between OLMCs and institutions by inviting organizations to make presentations at meetings. The Comité atlantique sur l'immigration francophone, established under the Société nationale de l'Acadie, was invited to make a presentation to ATL Network 41 on the status of Francophone immigration and related issues in the Atlantic Region. (Priority **3**)
- The Ontario Region took part in all coordination tables organized by the Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario (AFO), as well as the collaboration circle. This involves quarterly meetings with regional senior management and the AFO's board of directors. The Region and the AFO also agreed to meet every month to discuss issues relating to racialized Francophone groups. The goal of those meetings is to adopt a collaborative strategy to better serve these groups, which encounter challenges in applying for funding. (Priority **3**)

Leadership

Network 42 will continue its efforts to reach out to public service leaders by suggesting concrete actions that will help them influence their peers in federal institutions. To do this, Network 42 will engage various stakeholders and pursue implementation of the Strategy for Enhancing Senior Management Leadership in Federal Institutions until 2023.

Examples (2020–2021):

- National headquarters continues to implement the 2020–2023 Executive Leadership Strategy with partners like the Committee of Assistant Deputy Ministers on Official Languages (CADMOL), the deputy minister of PCH and the Council of the Network of Official Languages Champions. In addition, in partnership with the Canada School of Public Service, talks were organized as part of the annual Best Practices in Official Languages Forum, where the deputy minister of PCH played a major role as an official languages community champion in the public service. A video was also created to demystify Part VII and positive measures, and guide executives to be leaders in implementing section 41 of the OLA. (Priorities 1 and 2)
- The activities held during Linguistic Duality Week in the Prairies included a virtual session on leadership and linguistic duality, with the regional director general of the Prairies and Northern Region and official languages champion of the Prairies Federal Council, organized in collaboration with the National Managers' Community. (Priorities 1 and 2)

Continuous improvement

Network 42 must continue to develop the skills necessary to fulfil PCH's interdepartmental coordination mandate. Network 42's role of impact and influence with federal institutions, both at headquarters and in the regions, can be difficult for section 42 coordinators to understand. It requires knowledge not only of Part VII of the OLA, but of the environment in which they are striving to exercise influence. Section 42 coordinators must have the ability to properly advise federal institutions, all of which have different potential and realities based on their size, mandate and other factors. Coordinators must also have the ability to establish or maintain official languages networks and encourage federal institutions to participate in those networks, to varying degrees.

Examples (2020–2021):

- Network 42 collaborated on an infographic to showcase its 2019–2020 accomplishments and better tell the Network's story. The infographic was subsequently shared by the deputy minister of PCH, who is also an official languages community champion in the public service, with her counterparts and the chair of the federal councils. (Priority 1)
- In the West, a new interdepartmental coordination mechanism will serve as an incubator for ideas and turnkey projects in the region. "Inspir'Action" will involve various community and federal institution partners, to meet a targeted need in a specific sector. (Priorities 2 and 3)