



Key questions

to facilitate decision-making that may impact on the implementation of section 41 of the *Official Languages Act*

Who

Federal institutions are called upon to make many strategic decisions concerning, for example:

- the adoption or revision of a policy
- the creation or abolition of a program
- the establishment or elimination of a point of service

But what impact could these decisions have on the implementation of section 41 of the *Official Languages Act*, that is, on their obligation to official language minority communities and on the advancement of English and French in Canadian society?

The following are some key questions for federal institutions to consider when making such decisions.

All federal institutions

What

- To **determine** impacts on official language minority communities and the promotion of English and French, from the initial development of policies through to their implementation, including the devolution of services.
- To **consult** interested parties as required, especially representatives of official language minority communities.
- To describe the actions and **demonstrate that your institution has taken into consideration** the needs of these communities or the requirements for promotion of both official languages.
- If there are impacts, to **plan** activities accordingly, prepare results evaluation mechanisms and present expected results.

When

Strategic planning and development of policies and programs

- At first glance, what impacts could the initiative have on official language minority communities, and on fostering the full recognition and use of both English and French in Canadian society?
 - How do you validate this assessment?
 - Should research activities be undertaken?
- Should official language minority communities be consulted?
- Does the initiative reflect the results of the research and consultations undertaken?
- Do the implementation principles take the impacts into account?
- In case of a negative impact, are disadvantages corrected?
- Have the expected results and performance measurement indicators been identified?
- Are the selected approaches well described and documented?

Implementation of policies and programs

- Does the initiative ensure that obligations regarding official language minority communities and the promotion of both official languages are taken into account during the whole process of its implementation?
 - For example, by maintaining contact with these communities?
- Will the initiative involve a third party?
 - If yes, what actions are taken to ensure the third party's commitment to foster the development of official language minority communities and the promotion of both official languages?

Accountability

- What are the immediate, intermediate and final results obtained concerning the implementation of the federal commitment towards the development of official language minority communities and the promotion of both official languages?
- Does the evaluation reveal that adjustments are necessary?
- Are existing mechanisms concerning the measurement of results and accountability satisfactory?

Communications

- Do the strategies and communication plans take official language minority communities into account?
- What communication tools are used to communicate with these communities?
- Among others, are existing media in the language of minority communities being used?

More information

Interdepartmental Relations and Accountability Directorate (IRAD)
Official Languages Branch (OLB)
Canadian Heritage
15 Eddy Street, 7th floor
Gatineau, Quebec
K1A 0M5

Courriel : portail41-gateway41@pch.gc.ca

Related resources

Title	URL address
Guide on Part VII of the <i>Official Languages Act</i> : Support to communities and promotion of English and French	https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/official-languages-bilingualism/publications/guide.html
Part VII: Advancement of English and French – <i>Official Languages Act</i>	https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/o-3.01/page-3.html#h-384407
Publications – Official language communities and lingistic duality	https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/official-languages-bilingualism/publications.html
Reflection tool for the implementation of section 41 of the <i>Official Languages Act</i>	https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/official-languages-bilingualism/publications/reflection-tool.html

Note: At the time of the last update of this publication, all hyperlinks were functional.

Notice to readers The purpose of this document is to assist federal institutions in identifying, within the framework of their mandate, action plans related to the implementation of Section 41 of the *Official Languages Act*.

Please note that this document does not constitute legal advice. For such advice, please consult the legal services unit of your federal institution, which, when needed, will contact the Official Languages Directorate of Justice Canada.

Questions or comments:
portail41-gateway41@pch.gc.ca

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Catalogue Number: CH14-44/2019E-PDF

ISSN: 978-0-660-32299-2

Cette publication est aussi offerte en français sous le titre « Questions clés pour faciliter la prise de décision pouvant avoir une incidence sur la mise en œuvre de l'article 41 de la *Loi sur les langues officielles* ».

Date of last revision: February 9, 2023