

Evaluation of the Liaison Function – Final Report

Submitted to:
Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages

January 16, 2017

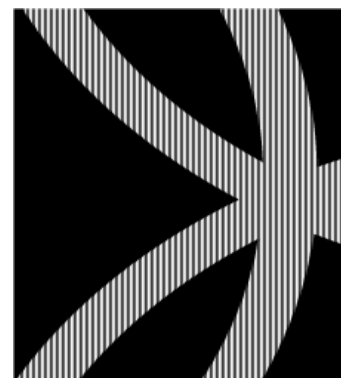


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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CAB	Compliance Assurance Branch [OCOL]
DPR	Departmental Performance Report
FTE	Full-time equivalent
GoC	Government of Canada
OCOL	Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages
O&M	Operations and Maintenance [funding]
OL	Official Languages
PA	Project Authority
PCH	Patrimoine canadien / Canadian Heritage
PLDP	Promotion of Linguistic Duality Program
RPP	Report on Plans and Priorities
SCC	Supreme Court of Canada
TB	Treasury Board of Canada
TBS	Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This report presents the final report of the 2016 evaluation of OCOL's liaison function.

Purpose

The purpose of this evaluation was to provide an assessment of the relevance and performance of activities undertaken by the liaison function.

Methodology

The evaluation employed the following methodologies: a review of program documents and literature; an assessment of regional minority official language rights organizations' websites; 44 interview consultations with officials from: OCOL; federal institutions; community organizations; and, provincial official languages organizations.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

Relevance

The liaison function is clearly within the legal mandate and duties of the Commissioner, according to Section 56 (1) of the *Official Languages Act*.

The evaluation found that there is a continued need for the liaison function at OCOL. Interviews noted a lack of awareness among some stakeholders regarding the rights and obligations of the public and federal institutions with regard to the *Official Languages Act*. In addition, interviews with stakeholders identified a need for OCOL to provide visible support to minority official languages communities and community organizations. The evaluation noted an ongoing need for information about official languages in regions at federal institutions. The evaluation confirmed a need for OCOL expertise from the liaison function periodically for the planning and implementation of major sporting and cultural events.

To carry out his or her mandate, the documentation and interview consultations indicated that the Commissioner requires a modest level of local presence and visibility for OCOL in all regions of Canada. Local presence is needed for the Commissioner to be well-informed of concerns and perspectives of communities. To ensure accuracy and that regional perspectives are reflected, there is a need for the regional input provided through the liaison function to inform OCOL research, reports, recommendations, and tools.

Performance

The evaluation found that the liaison function is delivering important activities and outputs. The outcomes from the liaison work include: improved and sustained relations between OCOL and targeted stakeholder groups; stakeholders support OCOL's strategic priorities; Parliament is better informed of official languages and minority official language community needs; and, minority official language communities are strengthened.

Improved and sustained relations between OCOL and targeted stakeholder groups: The liaison function has maintained a modest OCOL presence and active network of stakeholders. The liaison function officials have tailored their work to meet the unique features of stakeholders in each region. OCOL liaison has built links with key federal institutions in each region and provides a local presence for OCOL. OCOL local visibility with communities and with federal institutions in regions has been enhanced through the liaison activities. OCOL tools and reports were highly-valued by stakeholders. The liaison function has provided proactive OCOL presence and expertise for major sporting or cultural events, such as the Pan Am / Parapan Am Games, the Canada Games, or the Semaine nationale de la Francophonie.

Stakeholders support OCOL's strategic priorities: In general, based on interviews and a website review, while there were important differences in the top priorities of community organizations according to the region and the local provincial organization, there was full alignment with the OCOL objectives and strategic priorities aiming to protect the rights guaranteed by the federal *Official Languages Act* and the objective to promote linguistic duality.

Parliament is better informed of official languages and minority official language community needs: Parliament has been better informed due to the input from OCOL regions to OCOL headquarters for the preparation of OCOL policy and research reports, accountability reports to Parliament, and testimony by OCOL officials to Parliamentary Committees. Liaison officers have planned and organized strategic visits for the Commissioner and OCOL top management.

Minority official language communities are strengthened: OCOL's expertise, visible presence, tools and support are valued by communities. OCOL's promotional tools have enhanced the credibility of community organizations. Stakeholders consulted for the evaluation have confirmed that the tools produced by OCOL are of significant value to stakeholders. The set of tools have been well-promoted by the liaison function and are conveniently presented and organized on the OCOL website.

Cost-Effectiveness

The function appears to be operating with due regard to economy and efficiency. Liaison workplans are based on OCOL's strategic plan and regional officials manage carefully within a limited budget. Budgetary limitations require that a visible presence with stakeholders in each region can only be achieved over a period of years. Effective practices are shared between regions.

CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation has confirmed the continued relevance of the OCOL liaison function. The function is delivering important results that advance the mandate of the Commissioner. The evaluation found that the resources used to deliver the liaison function are used in a cost-effective manner.

The evaluation team noted that the OCOL officials delivering the liaison function demonstrated a high level of commitment to the value and success of the liaison function.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluation presents three recommendations in the areas of: completing a plan for a performance measurement strategy for the liaison function; preparing a formal, consolidated written briefing to the Commissioner summarizing the intelligence gained from the liaison function; and, preparing a multi-year liaison plan for each region to ensure liaison coverage with key regional minority official language organizations.

Performance information profile for the liaison function:

Recommendation 1: The Assistant Commissioner, Policy and Communications, should develop a Performance Information Profile for the liaison function.

The liaison function makes an important contribution to the results achieved by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages. Quantitative outputs from liaison activities are tracked. The expected results (outcomes) from the liaison activities have not been detailed, measured on an on-going basis, or reported. A logic model for the function has been prepared for the purpose of this evaluation. The results noted in the logic model have been validated by the evaluation. The logic model, while presenting the expected outcomes from the liaison activities, needs to be accompanied by a performance measurement strategy to ensure information and data is being collected to effectively monitor and report on results.

Consolidated written briefing to the Commissioner summarizing the intelligence gained from the liaison function:

Recommendation 2: Each quarter, the Assistant Commissioner, Policy and Communications, should prepare a report to the Commissioner, summarizing the intelligence gained from regional officials including the liaison function.

There is a steady flow of oral information from regions to HQ. Liaison officials participate in strategic planning discussions and provide input for the preparation of the strategic plan. They participate on working groups that are established for specific reports and studies. Regional officials participate in sporting or cultural events and provide expert advice as members of event-specific organizing committees. Occasional written briefings are not consolidated for the Commissioner. A quarterly report to the Commissioner, summarizing the intelligence gained from regional officials would be valuable as an effective way to formally consolidate this information to inform the Commissioner regarding stakeholder concerns and priorities.

Multi-year liaison plan for each region:

Recommendation 3: Each year, as part of the operational planning process, the Assistant Commissioner, Policy and Communications, should approve a multi-year liaison plan from each region that provides for liaison with key regional minority official language organizations.

The OCOL liaison function covers relatively large geographic regions, using only a modest level of resources. Liaison with key federal organizations is completed through the federal councils and other well-established ongoing federal networks and committees. A multi-year liaison plan for each region could help ensure that the liaison function maintains relations, over the course of time, with key regional stakeholders, and in particular, targeted minority official language organizations in each region. This liaison plan could provide guidance to ensure a consistent approach across Canada and regional coverage aligned with the stated corporate priorities.

EVALUATION REPORT

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings and recommendations of the 2016 evaluation of OCOL's liaison function.

The report outlines the evaluation purpose, scope and methods used in conducting the evaluation, as well as presenting the evaluation findings in relation to the Core Evaluation issues that were agreed to during the planning phase of the evaluation and include the continued relevance of the liaison function, and its performance in terms of the results achieved, and overall cost-effectiveness.

A final section provides a summary of the evaluation findings and recommendations. Appendices are included which present the detailed questions considered during this evaluation, and a logic model for the liaison function that was prepared for the purpose of this evaluation.

PURPOSE, SCOPE, METHODOLOGY & DATA LIMITATIONS

Purpose: The purpose of this evaluation was to provide an assessment of the relevance and performance (efficiency, effectiveness, and economy) of activities undertaken by the liaison function, a component of the Promotion of Linguistic Duality Program (PLDP). This evaluation examined the extent to which the activities related to the liaison function in regional offices contributed to the achievement of the expected results of the Promotion of Linguistic Duality Program and the overall achievement of OCOL's mandate.

Scope: This evaluation focused upon the activities of OCOL's liaison function in the regions over the last 3 fiscal years (2013-2014 to 2015-2016). The liaison activities under evaluation did not include the liaison and outreach activity conducted by the Policy and Communication Branch in OCOL's headquarters or by the Compliance Assurance Branch. The Function's liaison activities are seen as two-way communication whereby there is an exchange of information, and feedback between the parties with regard to the information they receive (e.g., a meeting between an OCOL official and an official from a stakeholder organization). "Promotion", on the other hand, is seen as one-way communication (e.g., a presentation on YouTube or a kiosk at an event).

The estimated resources, used in an average fiscal year for the liaison function activities subject to this evaluation, are estimated, for the purpose of this evaluation study, at approximately \$1 million annually, involving, to a greater or lesser extent, about 10 FTE.

The liaison function is part of the Promotion of Linguistic Duality Program. Through this Program, OCOL works with parliamentarians, federal institutions and other organizations subject to the *Official Languages Act*, official language communities and the Canadian public in promoting linguistic duality. OCOL builds links between federal institutions, official language communities and different levels of government to help them better understand the needs of official language communities, the importance of bilingualism and the value of respecting Canada's linguistic duality. To fulfill its promotion role, OCOL conducts research, studies and public awareness activities. OCOL intervenes from time-to-time with senior federal officials to encourage them to implement measures to instill a change in culture where necessary in order to fully integrate linguistic duality within their organizations.

The Commissioner, with support from the regional offices and liaison officers, works with federal institutions and other organizations, various levels of government and official language minority communities throughout the country. This collaborative official languages network helps the Commissioner to gain a better understanding of the needs and concerns of minority official language communities; make relevant recommendations and intervene judiciously in major official languages issues.

Methodology:

The evidence was gathered for this evaluation using the following methodologies:

- ⇒ a review of program documents and literature;
- ⇒ An assessment of regional minority official language rights organizations websites in order to identify their priorities;
- ⇒ 44 interview consultations with the following groups:
 - OCOL officials at headquarters and in regional offices;
 - Officials from federal institutions;
 - Officials from community organizations; and,
 - Officials from provincial official languages organizations.

The information collected was analyzed from the perspective of the results achieved by the liaison function as a whole. The evaluation did not conduct an assessment of the work of any specific individual or specific regional office.

Data Limitations:

Performance data collected by the liaison function is focused upon quantitative outputs delivered by the liaison function rather than the medium and longer term impacts (outcomes) of these activities and associated outputs. OCOL officials are aware of the potential value of collecting data that supports the assessment of impacts (outcomes) and the function is undertaking work to improve the ability to measure outcomes from liaison activities. Given the limitations of existing performance data, this evaluation study has used the limited qualitative comments derived from the interview consultations as an indicator of the intermediate and longer-term results achieved by the liaison function.

A directed sample of OCOL stakeholders was invited to participate in an interview for this evaluation, based on recommendations from the OCOL regional officials. The sample was selected to ensure stakeholders were included from variety of groups across Canada. This approach was considered appropriate given the size of the function and the focused nature of the evaluation study. The evaluation team is confident that the interview evidence, complemented by the evidence from the document and web review, provided adequate evidence to support the development of the evaluation findings.

FINDINGS

RELEVANCE

The liaison function is clearly within the legal mandate and duties of the Commissioner, according to Section 56 (1) of the *Official Languages Act*.

It is the duty of the Commissioner to take all actions and measures within the authority of the Commissioner with a view to ensuring recognition of the status of each of the official languages and compliance with the spirit and intent of this Act in the administration of the affairs of federal institutions, including any of their activities relating to the advancement of English and French in Canadian society.

Lack of awareness of rights and obligations: There is a continued need for the liaison function at OCOL. Interviews identified a lack of awareness among stakeholder groups regarding the rights and obligations of the public and federal institutions with regard to the *Official Languages Act*. Natural and ongoing turnover of officials at community organizations and at federal institutions makes this a continuous need.

Need for visible support to communities: Interviews with officials from community organizations noted that there is a need for visible support and tools to facilitate their work in communities to promote linguistic duality and services to the minority official language community. Visible support from OCOL is needed to build confidence in the minority communities and to encourage the development of these communities across Canada. Officials from community organizations supporting core French or English curriculum and immersion programs indicated in interviews that they have a need for data about linguistic duality in Canada, and visible Federal support and tools for this work.

Ongoing need for information about OL at federal institutions: Interviews with officials from Federal institutions noted that there was a lack of awareness regarding the OL rights and obligations of federal institutions. Interviewees stated that this need is ongoing due to the natural attrition, retirements, and turnover of staff in federal institutions. Interviewees noted a need for expert information and tools to operate a bilingual workplace, and to meet the

obligations of federal institutions with regard to the *Official Languages Act*. Interviews with official language coordinators at federal institutions identified a continued need for information, advice and tools on the promotion of Official Languages. This is required in order to respond to a lack of awareness among officials from federal organizations regarding their rights and responsibilities in relation to Official Languages and also in order to facilitate and support federal organizations in going beyond the minimum requirements of the Act.

Need for cost-effective local presence for planning and implementation of major sporting or cultural events: When there are major sporting or cultural events in a region, such as the Olympics, the Pan Am / Parapan Am Games, the Canada Games, Semaine nationale de la francophonie, etc., there is a need for the specialized OL expertise regarding service to the public and obligations under the *Official Languages Act*. OCOL provides advice for the planning and implementation of these events. In addition, there is a need for information regarding past experience at similar events, and the tools that have been used with success in past.

Local presence is required for the Commissioner to be well-informed of concerns and perspectives of communities: The documentation reviewed and interview consultations indicated that the Commissioner has a need for a modest level of local presence and visibility for OCOL in all regions of Canada in order to carry out his or her mandate under the Act. This regional presence is required in order to have a mechanism for listening to, influencing and connecting to Official Languages community organizations across Canada. The Commissioner needs to be aware of the Official Languages communities' concerns and priorities, and to demonstrate visible support to these communities where there is alignment with the Commissioner's mandate pursuant to the *Official Languages Act*. Interviews revealed that OCOL's regional presence helps to establish a level of trust and comfort with OCOL which in turn leads to more effective two-way communications. Those individuals consulted in interviews indicated that a regional presence can achieve a higher level of trust and confidence in OCOL compared with maintaining these relations from Headquarters.

Need for regional input to OCOL research, reports, recommendations and tools: The documentation review and interview consultations indicated that there is a need within OCOL, to have information and analytic capacity from the regional perspective, with regards to study planning, interpretation of data, and preparation of reports, recommendations, and briefings to top officials. Internal interview consultations indicate a need for regional input to inform OCOL research, studies, presentations, speeches, Annual Report, presentations to Parliament, and website contents. Interviewees indicated that regional perspective adds value and credibility to OCOL research, reports, recommendations and tools.

PERFORMANCE (RESULTS & COST-EFFECTIVENESS)

RESULTS

Based on data collected from the document review and interview consultations, the liaison function is delivering important activities and outputs, pursuant to the approved corporate plans. There is a logical link between these activities and outputs, and the intended outcomes of the broader program for Promotion and Linguistic Duality (of which the liaison function is an integral part). Information collected from documents and interviews for this evaluation indicates that the resources are used as required and expected, and the activities are carried out as planned. Moreover, the activities are fully consistent and fully aligned with the logic model that was prepared for this evaluation study. (Please see the logic model in Annex B.)

Qualitative interview data indicates that the program is delivering significant immediate and intermediate outcomes, taking into account the size of the program budget. These consultations also reveal that the liaison function is making an important contribution to the achievement of longer term outcomes expected from the liaison function. Neither the liaison function nor the program for the Promotion of Linguistic Duality currently measure and report results at the level of impacts or longer term outcomes. These outcomes include:

- ⇒ Improved and sustained relations between OCOL and targeted stakeholder groups;
- ⇒ Stakeholders support OCOL's strategic priorities;
- ⇒ Parliament is better informed of official languages and minority official language community needs; and
- ⇒ Minority official language communities are strengthened.

Improved and sustained relations between OCOL and targeted stakeholder groups (communities and federal organizations)

Liaison function has maintained a modest OCOL presence and active network of stakeholders:

Based on interviews and documents / website review, the OCOL liaison function has provided a modest level of presence and visibility for OCOL across Canada. In addition, the function has provided a mechanism for influencing and connecting to minority official language communities and for feeding back priorities of the communities to the Commissioner. Based on interviews, the resources allocated for liaison activities have been successful in maintaining an active network of stakeholders, including key officials from minority official language organizations and officials from key federal institutions, as well as officials from several provinces.

Liaison function officials have tailored the work to meet the unique features of stakeholders in each region:

There are significant differences in the stakeholder groups and the issues faced by minority official language communities and by federal institutions across Canada. These differences are due especially to: the language of the minority official language groups; the size of the minority official language groups; the history of the region with regard to official languages; and, the geographic dispersion of the minority official language groups. Interviewees stated that the OCOL liaison function has prepared regional workplans based on the OCOL national strategic plan, and tailored the priorities noted in the national plan to the unique aspects of each specific region. Based on interviews, OCOL regions have implemented these regional workplans with rigour.

OCOL liaison has built links with key federal institutions in each region: Based on the interviews conducted with OCOL staff and a sample of regional officials from federal institutions, OCOL's liaison function has established ongoing lines of communications with officials of key federal institutions in each region. For example, the liaison officers are in regular communications with officials at regional offices of Canadian Heritage, Service Canada, Canada Revenue Agency, Canada Border Services Agency, RCMP, and the Canada School of Public Service. OCOL regional officials have participated on Federal Councils in regions, Federal Council sub-committees focused on Official Languages issues, National Managers' Network, the Canada School of Public Service, and internal, formal and informal federal committees that aim to facilitate an exchange of information between federal managers and supervisors in regions.

Liaison function provided local presence for OCOL: Even considering the limited budget of the function, external interviewees noted the liaison function has helped to establish strong stakeholder relations and engagement. All external interviewees appreciated the ongoing support provided by OCOL's liaison officials. This visible support from OCOL and the accessibility of regional OCOL officials were noted and highly-valued by stakeholders consulted.

OCOL local visibility with communities and with federal institutions in regions was enhanced from liaison activities: Several interviewees stated that OCOL promotional tools that were advanced and used by the liaison function improved the progress and credibility of the work of community organizations. Stakeholders assessed these tools as enhancing the extent to which majority language groups are aware and able to support the rights and expectations of the minority communities.

OCOL tools and reports were highly-valued by stakeholders: OCOL liaison officials provided information and tools to minority official language communities to support the rights and expectations of the minority communities and to officials from federal institutions regarding their rights and obligations under the *Official Languages Act*. The liaison function also provided advice and tools regarding effective practices that federal institutions could consider to improve official languages aspects of their internal operations and service to the public. Interviewees commented on the excellence of the periodic studies that have been done, and the contents of the OCOL Annual Reports, and the OCOL PowerPoint presentations. These presentations have been prepared by OCOL liaison officials on a range of subjects that were of high interest to the minority official language communities consulted and to officials responsible for championing the use of minority official languages at federal institutions or for providing service to minority official language communities. OCOL regional officials are perceived as enhancing the awareness of stakeholders of the publication of an OCOL report and its contents by proactively presenting recent publications or tools at meetings of stakeholders or groups of stakeholders. Many interviewees commented that the OCOL regional officials, senior officials from headquarters, and the Commissioner were seen as credible sources of information and expert advice for matters related to Official Languages.

The following supports, tools and information were discussed positively by interviewees: research about early childhood services and improved access to these services in the minority

official language communities; services for newcomers; availability of post-secondary education; access to justice in the minority official language; and, rights and responsibilities from the *Official Languages Act*. No OCOL tools or supports were discussed negatively in any of the interviews with minority or majority language community organizations.

OCOL tools and information were also highly valued by federal institutions including: information in the areas of language of work; active offer of services in the minority official language¹; holding bilingual meetings; and general appreciation of the rights and obligations of federal institutions pursuant to the *Official Languages Act*. No OCOL tools, supports, or presentations were discussed negatively by any of the officials we interviewed from federal organizations.

The liaison function has provided proactive OCOL presence and expertise for planning and implementing major sporting or cultural events: Most stakeholders consulted noted ongoing cooperation with federal institutions (or federal-provincial-municipal partnering) on a range of special events held in specific regions from time-to-time. For example, interviews and documents indicate that service to the public in both official languages has been improved at major sporting events and other significant cultural events due to the outreach, expertise and support of OCOL liaison officers with the organizing entities. Internal interview consultations indicated that tools and policy templates to assist organizers of these events have been in development for many years and were continuously reviewed and improved as experience was gained. Examples of these types of events included the Vancouver Olympics, Canada Games held in different regions each year, and the 2015 Pan Am / Parapan Am Games. OCOL regional officials were proactive and ensured that Official Languages were promoted and visible at annual events, special days or weeks that were designed to recognize local communities, the anniversary of historical events, or institutions (such as the Semaine nationale de la Francophonie, Canada Day, or National Public Service Week).

Stakeholders support OCOL's strategic priorities

The strategic objective of OCOL is to ensure the rights guaranteed by the *Official Languages Act* are protected and linguistic duality is promoted as a fundamental value of Canadian society. Based on interview consultations and a review of the strategic priorities of Official Languages community organizations, there was alignment between OCOL's strategic priority and the priorities of community organizations.

In general, based on interviews and a website review, while there were important differences in the top priorities of community organizations according to the region and the local provincial organization, there was full alignment with the OCOL objective and strategic priorities aiming to

¹ OCOL. *Beyond Bilingual Meetings: Leadership Behaviours for Managers*. March 2011. <http://www.ocol-clo.gc.ca/en/publications/studies/2011/beyond-bilingual-meetings-leadership-behaviours-for-managers>

protect the rights guaranteed by the *Official Languages Act* and the objective to promote linguistic duality. According to websites and interviews, community priorities included: their overall priority to represent the minority official language communities in each province and territory, and to promote and defend service to the public in the minority official language. The work of OCOL, and its research and tools are aimed at complementing and supporting these community organizations. According to their websites and interviews, areas of concern for these organizations (and a focus of their efforts) were similar and included matters such as: early childhood education services; access to immigration services for newcomers to a province or territory; access to justice; access to bilingual services for travelers at major public facilities (for example airports and train stations); access to health services; access to services for the disabled; access to services to youth and training for youth; health and wellbeing services; access to services for Seniors; access to economic development and supports to entrepreneurs and services in the minority official language; and access to recreation, entertainment, and sports activities offered in the minority official language. Interviews with community organizations promoting linguistic duality for the majority language community noted their goals to improve access to quality core minority official language courses in schools for the majority language community (i.e., Core French or Core English); and, improved access to spaces in immersion programs for the majority language community.

Parliament is better informed of official languages and minority official language community needs

Parliament has been better informed of official languages and minority official language community needs due to the input from OCOL regions to OCOL headquarters for the preparation of OCOL policy and research reports, accountability reports to Parliament, and testimony by OCOL officials that was provided to Parliamentary Committees: The liaison function has provided important information on the concerns and challenges of stakeholders groups across Canada. Over the period examined in this evaluation, based on interview consultations and documents reviewed, OCOL’s liaison officials provided a continuous stream of oral and written communications to Headquarters officials. Regional OCOL officials provide information at “round tables”, in more formal, written communications, and through participation on OCOL committees and working groups. The information is provided on a continuous basis through these routine information-exchange mechanisms. In this manner, this information has helped to inform specific plans, research reports, presentations and/or testimony to Parliamentary committees, and the OCOL Annual Report, including recommendations of the Commissioner addressing a range of OL issues. Information that has been provided by regions in documentation has been accessible to HQ officials through the corporate filing system, provided the HQ officials are aware of the information and where it is stored. There is a small risk that an HQ official may not be aware of regional information about a given issue that may be on file. Regional OCOL officials have contributed to OCOL strategic

planning, to the OCOL Annual Reports (including recommendations presented in these reports), and to OCOL research studies such as the recent review of early childhood services.²

Liaison officers have planned and organized strategic visits for the Commissioner and OCOL top management: OCOL regional officials used their intimate knowledge of local issues and concerns to plan the visits of the Commissioner and top management to their respective regions. Completing these visits provided the Commissioner with strategic insights into the community concerns and perspectives and allowed the Commissioner to better inform Parliament regarding official languages and community needs, either through the written accountability reports to Parliament (e.g., DPR, RPP, and Annual Report) or in testimony provided to Parliamentary Committees. In general, a formal briefing note is provided to the Commissioner in advance of these regional visits. The briefing note provides relevant background on the regional OL issues and the officials with whom the Commissioner will be meeting during the visit. Interviewees noted that direct participation in regional visits across the country improves the understanding by the Commissioner and OCOL top management of minority official languages issues in each region.

Minority official language communities are strengthened

OCOL's regional visible presence and support has been valued by communities: Officials from minority official language communities commented that the visible presence of OCOL at their events, and the promotional tools, data and research studies that OCOL provides, are highly-valued support to the work of these minority official language communities.

OCOL's expertise and tools are valued by communities: All interviewees from these communities commented on how much they appreciated the visible support from the regional OCOL officials, and how much they valued the OL experience and expertise OCOL officials brought to the table. Interviewees noted that their communities were strengthened through OCOL's liaison activities since these activities increased the level of knowledge about Official Languages rights and obligations in the community. Stakeholders consulted for the evaluation have confirmed that the tools produced by OCOL have been well-promoted by the liaison function. The function benefits from an important repository of tools, presentations, and guidelines that have been developed and improved through years of use and feedback. The set of tools and resources are conveniently presented and organized on the OCOL website. There has been a continuous renewal of personnel in Official Languages communities (and in federal institutions), and therefore there is a continuous need to provide ongoing awareness-raising on the rights and obligations with regard to Official Languages. Interviews with stakeholders confirmed that the available tools do provide valuable and credible reference documents for stakeholders external to OCOL.

² OCOL. [Early Childhood: Fostering the Vitality of Francophone Minority Communities](http://www.ocol-clo.gc.ca/sites/default/files/early-childhood-report.pdf). October 2016.

OCOL's promotional tools have enhanced the credibility of community organizations: OCOL's tools, research reports, website information, and data served to enhance the credibility of the minority official language community organizations' dealings with other federal institutions or other levels of government. Interviewees noted that these tools have also been useful to majority language community organizations, for example, for their communications with school boards regarding access to immersion courses.

COST-EFFECTIVENESS

The function operated with due regard to economy and efficiency: Based on documents reviewed and interview consultations, the OCOL liaison function operated with due regard to economy and efficiency including the adoption of a number of cost-effective practices to obtain the greatest value from available resources. Interviews and documents indicated a high level of cooperation, collaboration and sharing of cost-effective practices across regions, and for service to the public at major sporting and cultural events. Regional OCOL officials meet together as a community of practice each six weeks by teleconference and travel to one region each year to attend an in-person meeting in that region. In addition, there is an annual meeting at headquarters to exchange information and effective practices. Every two weeks, regions report on issues or events in an internal newsletter – Highlights of the Fortnight / La Quinzaine en bref.

Liaison work plans are based on OCOL's strategic plan: Interview consultations indicated that the OCOL liaison function prepared its organizational work plans based on the OCOL strategic plan. Within the available resources, OCOL engaged actively with minority official language communities and with federal institutions. Interview consultations in urban locations where there was an OCOL regional office or a satellite office revealed an active level of engagement. A small number of interviewees in locations where there was no OCOL representative or satellite office, or where a position had been vacant for a long period of time, noted a lower level of interaction and engagement. These interviewees showed understanding of cost restraints within government, and emphasized that they would appreciate having more frequent information on Official Languages issues provided to them using cost-effective technology such as emails or teleconferences.

The regional officials managed carefully within a limited budget: The evaluation team estimated the budget of the liaison function within the scope of this evaluation. The estimated resources, used in an average fiscal year for the liaison function activities subject to this evaluation, are estimated, for the purpose of this evaluation study, at approximately \$1 million annually, involving, to a greater or lesser extent, about 10 FTE.

Based on evidence gathered through the internal interview consultations, the function has delivered its activities within this budget on a continuous basis and carefully planned the use of these resources to deliver the expected activities, maintain visible and effective support to stakeholders, and deliver immediate results (outputs). Interviews noted that the function has carefully managed its budget and activities in order to maintain a network over such a large

geographic area with so few staff. In each region, work plans with regional priorities are prepared by the Liaison Officer(s) and the Commissioner's Representative in a manner that builds on the priorities set out in the OCOL annual strategic plan. Interviews with OCOL regional officials revealed that all officers have work plans and performance agreements that reflect not only the OCOL strategic plan, but also, the Assistant Commissioner's performance agreement with the Commissioner.

Budgetary limitations require that visible presence with stakeholders in each region can only be achieved over a period of years: With regard to the extent to which the liaison function manages have a visible presence with community groups over a multi-year basis, the evaluation team did not find any formal national tracking or planning system in place to ensure that there were no gaps in maintaining the network with stakeholders. Challenges in maintaining relationships and being visible with regional community groups were noted during interviews. For example, a few interviewees noted the potential value of providing additional visibility and support from the liaison function to stakeholders in Eastern Ontario, Western Quebec, and Vancouver. The challenge and cost of travelling to rural communities was noted. One interviewee explained that in at least one region, coverage of the full territory was systematically monitored by the OCOL regional officials, and could only be achieved over a period of many years (due to the limited budget and time available with the current level of resources for travel to the more remote parts of the region). Depending on the geographic size of the different OCOL regions, interviewees noted that achieving liaison coverage of semi-rural and rural areas would only be achieved through careful multi-year liaison planning.

Effective practices are shared between regions: Official Languages information and practices are effectively communicated between regions and between regions and headquarters. Information is exchanged on a regular and systematic basis between regions and between regions and HQ, including:

- ⇒ Regular oral "round-tables" each week
- ⇒ Through written briefing notes (prepared from time-to-time for the Commissioner or Assistant Commissioner on a high-profile issue, or in the event of a visit to a region)
- ⇒ Contribution of texts to a bi-weekly internal newsletter (Highlights of the Fortnight)
- ⇒ Periodic reports prepared following a significant event or project
- ⇒ Teleconferences of regional officials every six weeks
- ⇒ Face-to-face meetings held annually with officials of the liaison function in each region on a rotational basis, and at meetings at HQ.
- ⇒ Tools prepared by one region are shared and adapted as needed and used in additional regions. These tools, such as the guide for Official Languages policies and procedures at significant sporting events (such as the Olympics, Canada Games, or Pan Am / Parapan Am Games) are maintained and improved over time, and adapted for use by different regions.

The function demonstrated effective knowledge management practices in this regard.

Effective collaboration between OCOL liaison officers and Commissioners' representatives was noted and this collaboration appears to be a factor in achieving highly visible support to stakeholder groups in all regions by building on the successful tools or presentations that are developed in one region, and then adapted for use in many or all regions.

In addition to collaboration and communication of effective practices between OCOL officials in regions, the evaluation revealed effective collaboration and communication between OCOL officials and provincial officials working in this field in several provinces. Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) are in place between OCOL and the Office of the French Language Services Commissioner of Ontario³ and the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages in NB⁴. A MOU is also in place directly between the provincial Commissioners in Ontario and NB.⁵ These MOUs have permitted an effective exchange of information and occasional collaboration between these governmental organizations, each focused on their specific federal or provincial mandates. Documents and interviews noted additional excellent relations with OCOL and similar provincial organizations in other provinces where there was no formal MOU in place.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

CONCLUSIONS

Confirmed relevance and performance of the function: The evaluation has confirmed the continued relevance of the OCOL liaison function. The function is delivering significant results that advance the mandate of the Commissioner. The evaluation found that the resources used to deliver the liaison function are used in a cost-effective manner.

OCOL officials demonstrated a high level of commitment to the value and success of the liaison function: Interviewees expressed a high level of commitment to the liaison function. External stakeholders at minority official language organizations and federal institutions expressed high regard for the expertise, supports and advice offered by OCOL officials regarding Official Languages issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Performance information profile for the liaison function:

³ <http://csfontario.ca/en/rapports/ra1213p/1-3-4-1-protocole-dentente>

⁴ March 6th 2013, Graham Fraser and Michel Carrier mark the 20th anniversary of the recognition of the principle of equality of both official language communities in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The press release from NB is available at <http://officiallanguages.nb.ca/newsroom/press-releases/graham-fraser-and-michel-carrier-mark-20th-anniversary-recognition-principle>. The statement to the media from the Commissioner of Official Languages is available at <http://officiallanguages.gc.ca/en/news/speech/2013/03/06/statement-media>.

⁵ <http://csfontario.ca/en/rapports/ra1213p/1-3-4-3-protocole-dentente>

Recommendation 1: The Assistant Commissioner, Policy and Communications, should develop a Performance Information Profile for the liaison function.

The liaison function makes an important contribution to the results achieved by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages. Quantitative outputs (immediate outcomes) from liaison activities are tracked. Interviewees confirmed that the quantitative measurement of outputs is of value for target-setting and operational work planning of the liaison function.

The expected results (longer-term outcomes) from the liaison activities have not been detailed, measured on an on-going basis, or reported. A logic model for the function has been prepared for the purpose of this evaluation. The results noted in the logic model have been validated by the evaluation. This is a key step in preparing a performance information profile to measure the results achieved compared with what was planned/expected.

There is a high level of awareness of the potential benefits to the liaison function of more effectively measuring the longer term impacts and outcomes from this work. All internal interviewees noted that measurement of the impacts of these activities over time would likely be useful for reporting on the value of the OCOL liaison function and for managing the limited resources allocated to the liaison function.

While useful for reporting and management purposes, measurement of results achieved is difficult since there are many other factors in addition to the work of the liaison function that would have an influence on impacts. The liaison function makes a contribution to the expected outcomes of OCOL as a whole, and it would be challenging to identify the specific contribution of the liaison function alone. Interviewees also noted the lag in time between doing the liaison work, and changes being achieved to organizational and cultural practices in communities; to workplaces in federal organizations; and, to service to the public by federal organizations.

A performance information profile could take these constraints into account and provide a means for the function to measure and report on its contribution and support to the fulfilment of the Commissioner's mandate.

Consolidated written briefing to the Commissioner summarizing the intelligence gained from the liaison function:

Recommendation 2: Each quarter, the Assistant Commissioner, Policy and Communications, should prepare a report to the Commissioner, summarizing the intelligence gained from regional officials.

There is a steady flow of information between the regions and HQ. Much of the briefings and flow of information from regions is oral. A periodic written summary of key information

discussed at round-table briefings could provide a complement to the oral briefings that take place within the liaison function.

Information is exchanged at round-table meetings held on a frequent basis, including a weekly briefing session with top management. A bi-weekly internal newsletter, *Highlights of the Fortnight/La Quinzaine en bref*, is used to transmit information within regions and Headquarters. Formal written briefing notes are prepared for specific issues or events, and for visits to a region by the Commissioner or Assistant Commissioner. Liaison officials participate in the preparation of the strategic plan, and provide input for specific reports, studies, speeches, and testimony to Parliamentary Committees. Regional officials often provide advice for periodic sporting or cultural events and participate as members of event-specific organizing committees. Occasional written briefings are not consolidated for the Commissioner.

A quarterly report to the Commissioner, summarizing the intelligence gained from regional officials would be valuable as an effective way to consolidate this information to inform the Commissioner regarding stakeholder concerns and priorities. In addition, this report could be made accessible to other OCOL officials to maintain organizational awareness of these regional concerns and priorities.

Multi-year liaison plan for each region:

Recommendation 3: Each year, as part of the operational planning process, the Assistant Commissioner, Policy and Communications, should approve a multi-year liaison plan from each region that provides for liaison with key regional minority official language organizations.

The OCOL liaison function covers relatively large geographic regions, using only a modest level of resources. Liaison with key federal organizations is completed through the federal councils and other well-established ongoing federal networks and committees. In all regions, interviews noted the high number of potential networking events both with minority official language communities and with federal organizations, and the need to carefully set outreach priorities in order to maintain an effective network over time.

A few interviewees noted that there was a potential lack of liaison coverage in some areas with significant minority official language groups. Even with budget constraints and the expected turnover of regional OCOL staff over time, with a multi-year liaison plan, it may be possible to assure a minimal level of coverage of key community stakeholders in each region.

A formal, multi-year liaison plan for each region could help ensure that the liaison function maintains relations, over the course of time, with key regional stakeholders, and in particular, the minority official language organizations in each region. This liaison plan could provide guidance to ensure a consistent approach across Canada, aligned with the stated corporate priorities.

ANNEX A: DETAILED EVALUATION QUESTIONS

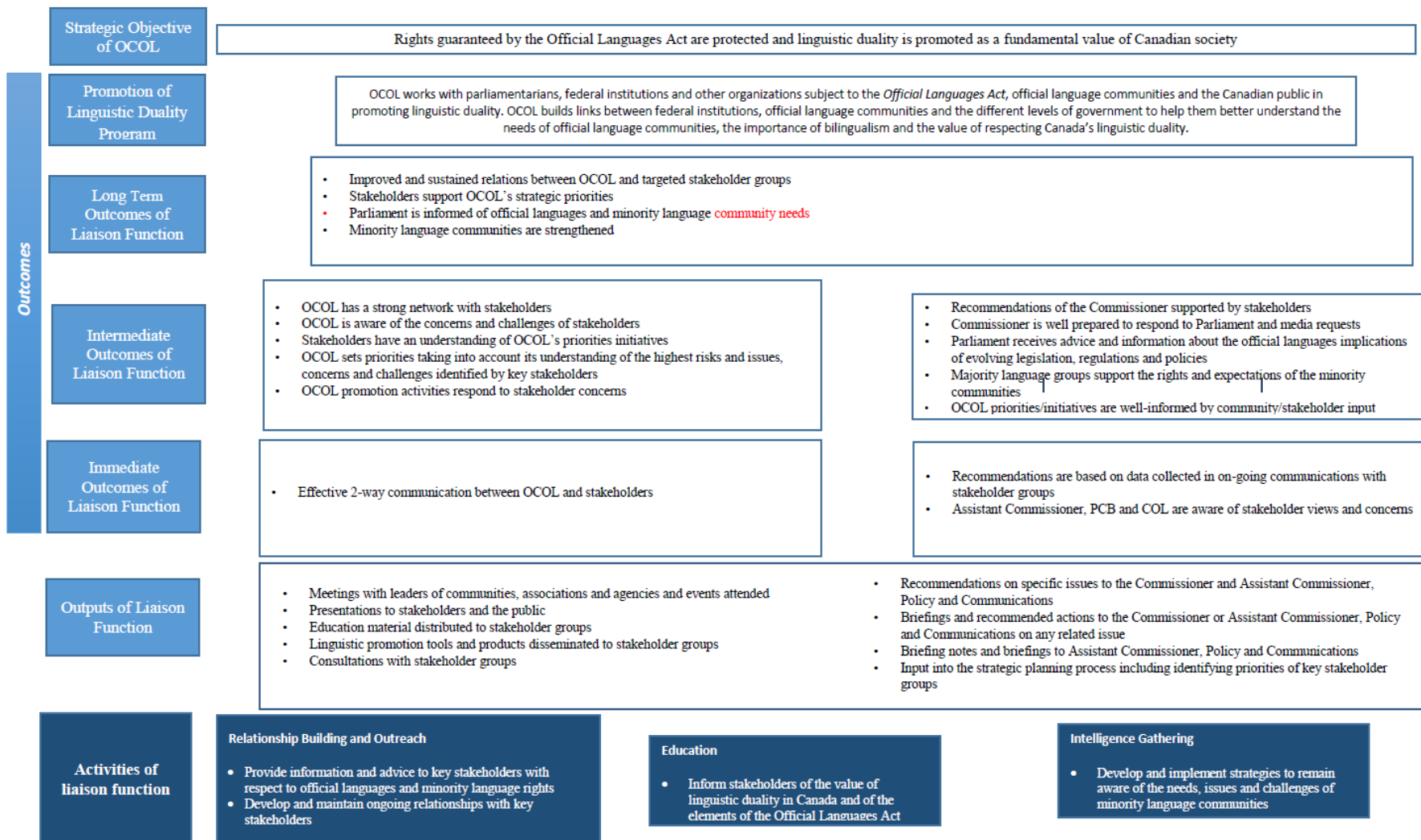
The table presented below presents the Evaluation Core issues and the related Evaluation Questions that were assessed through this evaluation study. This text presented in the evaluation report has summarized the evaluation findings and conclusions regarding each of these detailed Evaluation Questions.

Core Issues	Evaluation Questions
Relevance	
Issue #1 Continued Need for Program	1.1 What needs are the liaison function of OCOL designed to address/meet?
	1.2 What would be the consequences of not having a liaison function?
	1.3 What value do Official Languages minority communities place on the liaison function?
	1.4 What value do federal institutions in regions place on the liaison function?
Issue #2	
Issue #2 Alignment with OCOL Priorities	2.1 How does the liaison function support OCOL corporate strategic planning?
	2.2 How are the liaison function activities impacted by OCOL strategic planning?
Performance (Effectiveness, Efficiency and Economy)	
Issue #3 Achievement of Expected Outcomes	3.1 Does OCOL actively engage with Official Language Communities?
	3.2 Does OCOL actively engage with federal institutions in regions? In headquarters?
	3.3 Do OCOL priorities and activities reflect the priorities and concerns of Official Language Communities?
	3.4 How does the liaison function of OCOL assist the Assistant Commissioner and/or the Commissioner in gaining a better understanding of the needs and concerns of communities?

	3.5 How does the liaison function of OCOL assist the Assistant Commissioner and/or the Commissioner in gaining a better understanding of the needs and concerns of federal institutions in regions?
	3.6 How has the work of the liaison function informed recommendations made to the Commissioner?

ANNEX B : LIAISON FUNCTION LOGIC MODEL

OCOL Liaison Function Logic Model



ANNEX C: LISTING OF ORGANIZATIONS CONSULTED

Listing of Interviews Completed

Type of Organization	Number of interviews
OCOL HQ Officials	8
OCOL Regional Officials	11
Officials from Official Language Organizations	8
Officials from Federal Institutions	14
Officials from Provincial Organizations	3
Total	44

OCOL HQ

1. Assistant Commissioner, Compliance Assurance Branch
2. Assistant Commissioner, Policy and Communication Branch
3. Director, Communications
4. Director, Investigations, Compliance Assurance Branch

5. Director, Performance Measurement, Compliance Assurance Branch
6. Director, Policy and Research
7. General Counsel
8. General Counsel (former)

OCOL Regional Officials

1. Commissioner's Representative – Atlantic Region
2. Commissioner's Representative – Quebec Region
3. Commissioner's Representative – Ontario Region
4. Commissioner's Representative – Manitoba and Saskatchewan Region
5. Commissioner's Representative - Alberta, British Columbia, Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut Region
6. Liaison Officer – Atlantic Region
7. Liaison Officer – Quebec Region
8. Liaison Officer – Ontario Region
9. Liaison Officer – Sudbury Ontario Satellite Office
10. Liaison Officer – Manitoba and Saskatchewan Region
11. Liaison Officer – Regina Saskatchewan Satellite Office

Officials from Official Language Organizations

1. Canadian Parents for French (Quebec Region), Quebec Coordinator
2. Canadian Parents for French (B.C. and Yukon Region), Past Chairperson of the Board
3. Canadian Parents for French (Sooke Chapter, B.C.), President
4. Director General, Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse
5. Director General, La Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique
6. Director General, Société Franco-Manitobaine
7. Director General, Société Saint-Thomas-D'Aquin (PEI)
8. Executive Director, Voice of English-speaking Québec

Officials from Federal Institutions

1. Director, Human Resources Branch, Office of the Privacy Commissioner
2. Director General, Communications, Office of the Privacy Commissioner
3. General Counsel & Champion for Official Languages, Office of the Information Commissioner
4. Integration Officer, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, Western Region
5. Manager, National Managers Community in the Region of Quebec
6. Manager, Public Health Agency of Canada (for NB and PEI)
7. Program Manager, Atlantic Region, PCH
8. Regional Director General, Atlantic Region, PCH

9. Regional Director General, Prairies and Northern Region, Canadian Heritage
10. Regional Manager, Quebec Region, National Managers Community/Canada School of Public Service
11. Senior Advisor, Education and Social Development Programs and Partnerships, Quebec Region, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (former Learning Advisor at Canada School of Public Service)
12. Senior Advisor, Human Resources, Atlantic Canada Opportunity Agency
13. Senior Program Advisor, Department of Canadian Heritage, Western Region, Calgary
14. Vice-President, Public Affairs and Programs, Canadian Museum for Human Rights

Provincial Officials

1. Director of Public Relations, Commissioner of Official Languages of New Brunswick
2. Executive Director, Francophone Secretariat, Culture and Tourism, Alberta
3. Manager, Investigations and Audits, Office of the French Language Services Commissioner of Ontario