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● Information sheet:

## Bilingual meetings: step by step

### Invitation

Make sure that the invitation and the agenda clearly state that both official languages will be used at the meeting and that arrangements have been made to allow unilingual attendees to take part in discussions.

### Opening

Use both official languages at the start of the meeting and invite participants to speak in the language of their choice. Don't hesitate to appoint a co-chair if you are not entirely comfortable in the two official languages.

Ask participants whether they understand both official languages. If help is needed, offer summaries of the relevant topics in their preferred language.

Remind participants that the presence of unilinguals should in no way inhibit bilingual discussion.

### Presentations and discussions

If necessary, call upon participants who support your initiative to contribute something in the minority language.

Address participants in their first language.

### Closing

Remind participants that they are free to prepare documents in either English or French, both in draft or final form.

If necessary, decide which documents are to be translated and when. Ask participants for their comments.

Take note of suggestions or methods that were successful. Enter into a dialogue with your group.

Excerpted from: Chairing meetings: How to successfully conduct meetings in both official languages. [http://www.psagency-agencefp.gc.ca/ollo/tools-outils/pg/index\\_e.asp](http://www.psagency-agencefp.gc.ca/ollo/tools-outils/pg/index_e.asp)

### **Additional resources**

For more complete documentation concerning bilingual meetings consult:

#### **Official Languages Publications and Guides – Language of Work**

*Chairing Meetings: How to successfully conduct meetings in both official languages*

*You Have the Floor: Using Both Official Languages in Meetings*

[www.psagency-agencefp.gc.ca/ollo/tools-outils/pg/index\\_e.asp](http://www.psagency-agencefp.gc.ca/ollo/tools-outils/pg/index_e.asp)