Feasibility study for simultaneous interpretation service for Government of Yukon

Background:

The Government of Yukon is committed to increasing access to government services and information in French.

When bilingual employees are not available to provide direct service in French, the government relies on remote consecutive interpretation services to support continuity of service in priority areas.

Interpretation services generally fall into two main categories:

- consecutive interpretation, where the speaker pauses periodically to allow interpretation into the other language; and
- simultaneous interpretation, where interpretation is provided in real time while the speaker is speaking, typically through specialized equipment or remote interpretation platforms.

While consecutive interpretation can be effective in many contexts, it has limitations. It can significantly extend the duration of meetings and events, interrupt the flow of communication, and may not be well suited to situations where timely and seamless communication is required. These limitations are particularly relevant during public announcements, emergency communications briefings, media events, large public engagement sessions, public meetings, and other time-sensitive or high-profile communications activities.

Similar considerations may also arise in supporting bilingual proceedings of the Yukon Legislative Assembly.

At present, departments and public bodies that require simultaneous interpretation services generally rely on ad hoc arrangements. As a result, service delivery models, service levels, and outcomes may vary across government. This can create challenges related to availability, coordination, consistency, service quality, and cost-effectiveness.

To further strengthen access to services and information in French, the Government of Yukon is developing an evidence-based, government-wide approach to bilingual communications. As part of this work, there is an opportunity to assess the feasibility of strengthening simultaneous interpretation capacity across government and to identify the most appropriate, effective, and sustainable service delivery model to support departments, the Yukon Legislative Assembly, and other public bodies.

Purpose and outcomes

The purpose of this project is to assess the feasibility of strengthening simultaneous interpretation capacity across the Government of Yukon. The study will evaluate operational, governance, technology, resource, financial, and service delivery considerations and provide recommendations regarding the most appropriate, effective, and sustainable approach to supporting simultaneous interpretation services across government.

The study will examine and compare potential service delivery models, assessing their practicality, sustainability, cost-effectiveness, implementation requirements, and suitability for the Yukon context. Findings will support future decision-making and contribute to broader efforts to strengthen bilingual communications capacity across the Government of Yukon.

The project will provide:

- an understanding of the Government of Yukon's current approach to simultaneous interpretation services, including challenges, limitations, and opportunities;
- an assessment of potential service delivery models for simultaneous interpretation services;
- a comparative analysis of the advantages, disadvantages, costs, risks, and implementation considerations associated with each model;
- evidence-based recommendations regarding the most appropriate and sustainable approach, if any;
- analysis of governance, resource, technology, procurement, and financial considerations to support decision-making;
- an improved understanding of the role of simultaneous interpretation in supporting public announcements, emergency communications, public engagement activities, legislative proceedings, and other high-profile events; and
- a high-level implementation roadmap for the recommended approach, should the Government of Yukon choose to proceed.