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Introduction

Each year, thousands of international engineering graduates (IEGs) immigrate to Canada. They may be seasoned engineering professionals who have been practicing in their native countries, recently graduated engineering students or they may be working in jobs that would be technologist or technician positions in Canada. Regardless of which group they fall into, many of these IEGs arrive in Canada expecting to begin work as engineers and are unable to find engineering employment.

The Canadian Council of Professional Engineers (CCPE), its provincial and territorial partners, and Human Resources Development Canada have recognized the importance of addressing this critical employment issue. Together, they have embarked on a joint initiative to better enable IEGs to:

- gain employment in Canada;
- earn a licence as professional engineers (P.Eng. or ing.) in their province or territory of residence.

Launched in January 2003, *From Consideration to Integration (FC2I)* is a three-phase project.

In *Phase I*, the project team researched the Canadian immigration process, provincial and territorial engineering licensing procedures and approaches to assessing the credentials of IEGs, and gathered feedback from IEGs, settlement workers and from those who employ engineers.

In *Phase II*, team members will analyze the information gathered in Phase I, determine where the process of integration needs improvement, develop models, processes and tools to

better equip IEGs, develop consistent and transparent foreign credential recognition processes for licensing purposes, and begin building consensus among stakeholders on issues such as implementation of the selected solutions.

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integration – Its use in this report is intended to refer to obtaining an engineering employment (P.Eng. or ing.) and obtaining engineering license.

profession – When used in reference to engineering, it is intended to include the CCPE and its members – the provincial and territorial regulatory bodies, and not other engineering concerns.

foreign credential recognition – From the federal government perspective, FCR means recognition of an immigrant's qualifications compared to the Canadian equivalent. When it means other than that in this report, the difference is noted.

credential assessment – is a term used throughout the report in two ways: credentials as required by the regulatory bodies in their engineering licensing process, and credentials as required for the immigration process.

In *Phase III*, full implementation of the processes identified in Phase II will be undertaken, along with development of supporting information materials.

This report is the culmination of Phase I.

Project funding is provided by the Government of Canada's Human Resources Partnership Directorate and is part of an effort by the government to attract, develop and maintain a world-class labour force. This project is closely linked to the Government of Canada's Innovation Strategy, which the engineering profession strongly endorses. The project recognizes the important role that international engineering graduates can play in helping Canada to remain at the forefront of innovation.

BACKGROUND

Engineers help improve the lives of Canadians everyday. From fuel-efficient car designs to life-saving medical technology, safe playground equipment to new pharmaceuticals, engineers make invaluable contributions to our society.

Canadian engineers are recognized among the best in the world, having repeatedly demonstrated both the highest standards of innovation and an unwavering commitment to public safety.

Committed to a vision of inclusion and diversity within the profession² and mandated to uphold Canadian standards of engineering excellence, the CCPE and its provincial and territorial members have recognized that the country stands to benefit greatly if more IEGs can lend their expertise to the betterment of life in Canada.

Anecdotal evidence, media reports and input from settlement organizations in the late 1990s confirmed problems with unemployment and underemployment of IEGs.

Following these reports, CCPE embarked on a campaign to identify barriers to the integration of IEGs and develop strategies to topple them. On October 3, 2002, representatives of Canada's provincial and territorial regulatory bodies (but not employers) met in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Members unanimously agreed that:

"the profession should work together to facilitate the integration of foreign trained engineers into the profession, ensuring that they can obtain their P.Eng. more quickly and efficiently, without lowering admission standards or compromising public safety." (2002 – CCPE Meeting Notes from Halifax, N.S. 2002)

In January 2003, CCPE launched *From Consideration to Integration (FC2I)*, a project designed to improve the Canadian engineering profession's models and approaches to evaluating and recognizing foreign engineering credentials as they pertain to licensing, and facilitate the employment process for IEGs.

Governing the profession

Established in 1936, the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers (CCPE) is the national organization of the 12 provincial and territorial regulatory bodies/ordre. The provincial and territorial regulatory bodies/ordre regulate the practice of engineering in Canada and license the country's more than 160,000 professional engineers. (In Ontario, Professional Engineers Ontario licenses professional engineers, and sets standards for and regulates engineering practice in the province. The Ontario Society of Professional Engineers is a member-interest, advocacy organization, created jointly by Professional Engineers Ontario (PEO) and the Canadian Society of Professional Engineers.) CCPE serves the regulatory bodies (ordre in Quebec) which are its constituent and sole members, by delivering national programs that ensure the highest standards of engineering education, professional qualifications and professional practice. It also safeguards the values of the profession, promotes a greater understanding of the nature, role and contribution of professional engineers and engineering to society; and is the voice of its constituent members on national and international affairs.

² CCPE Vision document 2002.

Funded by the Government of Canada's Sectoral Partnerships Initiative within Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC), its findings may also help other professions, such as medicine and nursing, improve their approaches to integrating international graduates.

THIS REPORT

This report captures the research compiled during Phase I of the FC2I project. Because the integration paths followed by IEGs vary depending on their country of origin, province of destination, qualifications, experience and education, a broad environmental scan was conducted. Presented findings include:

- overview of the Canadian immigration process, including preparatory steps IEGs can take before coming to Canada; their experience upon arriving; and information and settlement support available to them;
- a profile of IEGs;
- a synopsis of the engineer licensing process by Canadian province and territory;
- results of focus groups with immigrant IEGs;
- input from settlement workers and employers; and
- analysis of other Canadian professions' approaches to integrating international graduates and of other countries' approaches to integrating IEGs.

The initial issues identified in the report will guide the analysis, research and consultations to be undertaken in Phase II.