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CCPG/CCGP secures federal support for geoscientist mobility project

CCPG - the Canadian Council of Professional Geoscientists - recently secured support of \$140,000 from the Government of Canada (GoC) to assist work to be undertaken over the next 15 months on common entry requirements for registration and on inter-provincial professional mobility.

This project is part of an initiative to assist regulated professions in Canada achieve compliance under Chapter 7 of the Agreement on Internal Trade, and comes out of work of the Forum of Labour Market Ministers and is directly overseen by an inter-governmental working committee - the Labour Mobility Coordinating Group (LMCG) - made up of provincial and territorial representatives.

Termed the “P.Geo=P.Geo” project, this initiative will combine the GoC’s investment with in-kind support from both CCPG and CCPG’s constituent members to focus on two important phases of work that have been identified as priority by all the participants.

Phase 1 will provide support to the Canadian Geoscience Standards Board (CGSB) - a standing committee of CCPG whose mandate includes CCPG’s Recommended Minimum Geoscience Knowledge and Work Experience guideline for registration as a professional geoscientist. While CGSB is currently in the midst of a five yearly review of this national guideline, the additional financial support will allow for a more comprehensive exercise than originally planned, such as additional working meetings of CGSB, assistance and guidance from an expert on licensure requirement criteria, and support with editorial and translation services. In addition to improving the commonly agreed educational requirements for registration as a professional geoscientist, (which embraces the three sub-streams of geology, environmental geoscience and geophysics), the project includes expanding the new guideline to also address core-competencies requirements for entry to the profession.

Phase 2, which will flow from Phase 1, will facilitate work by CCPG and its constituent associations aimed at introducing an improved Inter-Association Mobility Agreement (IAMA), or Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA), that will document the process for easier and faster transfer of licensure between provinces and territories and thus improve labour mobility for professionals. In addition to transfer of licensure, Phase 2 will also seek to address the challenging issue of appropriate regulation and licensure mechanisms that might allow for inter-jurisdictional and multi-jurisdictional practice within Canada. Activities in this phase include additional working meetings of the CCPG’s IAMA Task Force, engaging a professional facilitator and retaining a legal advisor - all aimed at enhancing labour mobility while at the same time ensuring the full protection of the public in each jurisdiction, as required under statute.

Speaking about the announcement, CCPG President Brenda Wright, P.GeoI said “This project will be really beneficial to the self-regulation of our profession, to the constituent associations that register and license our practitioners across Canada, and to the practicing professional geoscientists from coast to coast in Canada, who provide an ever expanding range of highly skilled services to society and our economy”

It has been agreed by CCPG and its constituent associations that having a consistent national set of registration requirements for professional geoscience among all jurisdictions that regulate geoscience in Canada is a vital underpinning of effective licensure and professional self-governance. Establishing consistency around registration, will demonstrate that indeed a “P.Geo=P.Geo” in Canada and will in turn allow CCPG to work with its constituent associations to introduce an improved MRA or IAMA.

Geoscience is a small and often individually specialized field-based profession and the services that geoscientists provide to society can often be required in unexpected places and at very short notice, thus creating a real need for professional mobility within Canada, while at the same time recognizing the need for the protection of the public and accountability that licensure provides. In addition to short-

term labour mobility needs, geoscientists frequently relocate and transfer their professional licensure within Canada, not just in response to evolving regional demands for skilled professionals, but also to expand their professional experience and overall competency development.

It is also important that youth from across Canada be encouraged to enter the profession and, to that aim, it is critical that the knowledge and experience requirements for licensure be consistent across the country, so that graduates of full university geoscience programs obtained in any one part of Canada are not later faced with unexpected barriers to registration, licensure and practice in other parts of Canada.

Ms Wright went on to say “Achieving a consistent national set of registration requirements that also embraces core competencies expectations will also provide the necessary tools to allow the regulatory associations to more equitably consider internationally-trained professionals seeking licensure in Canada, while maintaining agreed minimum standards for registration”

The decision by CCPG to make this project a priority, and to pursue this application for funding, follows from the fact that it fits directly into both ongoing and future plans that CCPG already has in place, and is acting upon, to better address standards for registration and licensure, labour mobility, and human resources and skills availability challenges facing the profession. This project is also directly in keeping with the mission statement of CCPG – which is “.... *to develop consistent high standards for licensure and practice of geoscience, facilitate national and international mobility, and promote the recognition of Canadian professional geoscientists*”.

Work on the *P.Geo=P.Geo* project has already commenced and a special face-to-face meeting of the Canadian Geoscience Standards Board will take place in Toronto on March 31. Other working meetings and much background work will follow. CCPG will be providing periodic updates on this special project as the work progresses.

More than 7,700 geoscientists are now licensed as professionals in Canada. CCPG is the national organization of the 10 provincial and territorial associations and ordre that regulate the practice of geoscience in Canada. The member associations comprise seven associations that jointly license engineers and geoscientists and three associations or ordre that license geoscientists only. There is currently no regulation of the practice of geoscience in Prince Edward Island or the Yukon.

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