

March 11, 2022

Consultation for the General Direction for a Guideline for Engineering and Engineering Firms on Indigenous Consultation and Engagement

The Ontario Society of Professional Engineers (OSPE) is the advocacy body and voice of the engineering profession. Ontario currently has over 85,000 professional engineers, 250,000 engineering graduates, 6,600 engineering post-graduate students and 37,000 engineering undergraduate students.

OSPE is pleased to participate in the consultation for the general direction for a Guideline for engineering and engineering firms on Indigenous consultation and engagement. OSPE operates on the values of diversity and inclusion, putting our support behind all dimensions of diversity, including being an ally to the Canadian Indigenous community. The engineering profession is long overdue for systemic change and creating space for Indigenous engineers and an indigenous voice is an essential starting point.

Data Research and Gatherings

We have taken the time to read the seven-page document outlining your plan in creating a guideline for firms and individuals to engage and consult the Indigenous community. As we know, sustainable and effective change is not possible if the change is not being informed by Indigenous leaders. As stated in the document, consistent research and collaboration was conducted to provide insight in what is needed. Your regional and national gatherings were comprehensive with multiple angles of engagement, including panel discussions and facilitated conversations. Hosting the gatherings in an accessible format is an often overlooked but essential quality in research. The accessible execution allowed for approximately 87 attendees combined, a motivating number that reflects the industry's need for this.

Among the two gatherings, there were several themes that attendees wanted to see reflected in the engagement process. Two notable themes were: the importance for organizations and individual engineers to undergo a learning process prior to taking on the guidelines, and the importance in respecting relationships, not only in a collaborative process, but in the Indigenous community. These should stand as pillars when developing the final guidelines.

Recommendations

The gatherings invited many valuable perspectives that must be reflected in the final guidelines, putting emphasis on collaboration and inclusion of the community by engaging community members and knowledge keepers, the incorporation of a learning and reflection process for organizations to undergo before they turn to the guidelines and finally, making sure the guidelines remain adaptable. It is important to provide learning opportunities based on regions. It is common knowledge that Indigenous bands across the country differ based on location and region meaning avoiding a blanket learning process is vital.

In addition to the guideline content, transparency of the ongoing collaboration with community members is essential. As stated in the document, the guidelines are meant to be a living document to reflect the constant learning that must be had to sustainably support the Indigenous community. A transparent timeline of the continued meetings will maintain motivation and keep accountability high. The previously mentioned theme of respecting relationships with the Indigenous community will guide the ongoing collaboration, keeping the guidelines relevant to current events and regional differences. Providing regular updates to the guideline signees acts as a reminder and maintains the standards of the guidelines.

Conclusion

The Ontario Society of Professional Engineers holds itself to a high standard of accountability in terms of diversity and inclusion. As the advocacy body for engineers in Ontario, we have a responsibility to our members and the broader engineering community to provide tangible solutions for society's biggest challenges. We thank you for the opportunity to be a part of the consultation process for the Guidelines for engineering and engineering firms on Indigenous consultation and engagement. We look forward to utilizing the final guidelines and fulfilling our role in an equitable engineering industry.

Sincerely,



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Chair and President
Ontario Society of Professional Engineers



Sandro Perruzza
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