

*An analysis
of information
available
to immigrating
tradespersons*

CONSTRUCTION
SECTOR COUNCIL



CONSEIL SECTORIEL
DE LA CONSTRUCTION

FOREIGN CREDENTIAL RECOGNITION:

HOW DO I FIND OUT?

**Inside cover of the Foreign Credential Recognition:
How Do I Find Out?**

**An analysis of information available to
immigrating tradespersons**

The Construction Sector Council (CSC) is a national organization committed to the development of a highly skilled workforce – one that will support the current and future needs of the construction industry in Canada.

Created in April 2001, and financed by both government and industry, the CSC is a partnership between labour and business. The CSC is governed by a Board of Directors who represent a variety of interests within the construction industry. At the heart of the CSC's mandate is the need to address human resource issues through partnerships within the construction industry.

Like many industries, the construction industry faces a number of human resource challenges. These include the need to accurately forecast labour demand and supply, to increase the mobility of workers, to make the most of new technologies, and to cope with an aging workforce. As a result, the CSC has identified four key priorities:

- Labour Market Information
- Technology at Work
- Career Awareness Programs
- Standards and Skills Development

This study is part of the CSC's Labour Market Information activities.

This report is also available in French, and it is available electronically at www.csc-ca.org.



For more information, or additional copies contact:

The Construction Sector Council

220 Laurier Ave. West, Suite 1150

Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5Z9

Phone: (613) 569-5552

Fax: (613) 569-1220

info@csc-ca.org

Prepared by: The Construction Sector Council

Submitted by: Praxis Research & Consulting Inc.

Halifax, Nova Scotia

Fall 2006

Funding for this project was provided by the Government of Canada's Sector Council Program.

The opinion and interpretations in this publication are those of the Construction Sector Council and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.

Canada

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	2
2. NATIONAL INITIATIVES	3
2.1. Citizenship and Immigration Canada	3
2.2. Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials.....	4
2.3. Human Resources and Social Development Canada	5
2.4. Work Destinations, Forum of Labour Market Ministers	6
3. PROVINCIAL INITIATIVES.....	7
3.1. Ontario	7
3.2. British Columbia.....	9
3.3. Alberta	10
3.4. Québec	11
3.5. Other Provincial Initiatives	12
4. CREDENTIAL ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION SERVICES.....	13
5. OTHER INITIATIVES	14
5.1. Engineering.....	14
5.2. Architects	15
5.3. Health Care Sector	15
5.4. Trade Occupations in Construction	16
6. KEY FINDINGS	18
6.1. Sources of Information	18
6.2. Types of Information	18
6.3. Information Available for Specific Occupations/Sectors	18
6.4. Accessibility	19
6.5. Information Gaps	19
6.6. Lessons Learned	20
APPENDIX I: REFERENCES	21
APPENDIX II: WORLD WIDE WEB SOURCES	22



The Construction Sector Council (CSC) is interested in understanding what information on the construction industry is currently being provided to individuals interested in immigrating to Canada.

The immigration process, from start to finish, involves many steps. The first step for most immigrants is to become informed on the challenges and opportunities that face them as they make this critical life decision. Before and after arrival, immigrants will likely have contact with many organizations, including Canadian embassies, various federal and provincial/territorial government departments, recruitment agencies, prospective employers, and immigrant-serving agencies.

In light of the many information sources, this research is by no means comprehensive but rather intended to provide an indication of some existing approaches and examples of innovative ways to provide information. In particular, the research focused on addressing the following questions:

- What are the most common sources of information for potential and actual immigrants?
- What types of information are made available to immigrants before and after they arrive in Canada?
- What information is available for those immigrants interested in working within specific occupations or sectors, including specified trades and the construction industry?
 - How specific is the information?
 - Does it specify which office to contact, which industry groups cover their trades and how to obtain provisional trade certificates?
 - Is there information on Canadian health and safety regulations, building codes and other workplace requirements?
- How are potential and current immigrants made aware of construction opportunities?
- How easy are these information sources to access?
- Do any information gaps exist?
- What can be learned from the scan of existing sources and types of information?

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) is “Canada’s official source of immigration and citizenship information.”

2 NATIONAL INITIATIVES

2.1. CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION CANADA

Established in 1994, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) is “Canada’s official source of immigration and citizenship information.”¹ As part of the Government On-Line (GOL) program,² CIC hosts a website (www.cic.gc.ca) that provides clients with information on citizenship and immigration services available from federal departments and other levels of government.

Information is available through a single window grouped by topic rather than by organization. There are seven topics:

- Choose Canada to Immigrate;
- Choose Canada to Study;
- Choose Canada to Work;
- Choose Canada to Visit;
- After You Arrive;
- Refugees; and
- Citizenship.

The Choose Canada to Immigrate link covers the different classes of immigrants – federal skilled worker, business, family, provincial nominee and Québec-skilled.³ The web page explains how the

immigration process uses a points-based system to qualify under the Skilled Worker Program and does not require the assessment of foreign credentials and/or certifications. The six selection factors being education, language skills, work experience, age, arranged employment in Canada and adaptability.

The web page has an on-line self-assessment tool to determine whether one would qualify as a skilled worker. The only reference to specific occupations is in relation to work experience. The system assigns points if an individual has more than one year of experience completing specific occupational duties as defined by the National Occupational Classification 2001 (HRSDC).

The Choose Canada to Work web page targets people interested in temporary employment. Generic employment topics are covered, without reference to employment in specific occupations or sectors.

Commencing in 2005, CIC led the development of a comprehensive, national immigration portal. The Going to Canada (GTC) Immigration Portal is intended to be a one-stop, on-line resource for non-Canadians and newcomers to Canada.⁴ The GTC website (www.directioncanada.gc.ca) can also be accessed from the Government of Canada site (www.canada.gc.ca) and through the Canada International site (www.canadainternational.gc.ca).

¹ www.cic.gc.ca

² “Government On-Line is a Canadian government initiative intended to provide Canadians and non-Canadians with greater access to on-line information and services that focus on client needs, are user-friendly, and available anytime and anywhere around the world.” Source: www.cic.gc.ca/english/departments/gol-report-2005.html

³ Employers unable to fill skilled positions with Canadian residents may present their business case to the Provincial Nominee Program and apply for approval to recruit a specified number of foreign candidates. Once nominated, an individual has to then make a separate application to CIC for permanent residence.

⁴ As part of the federal government’s Internationally Trained Worker Initiative, the 2005 federal budget provided funding for the development of the “Going to Canada” website.

Though the Going to Canada Immigration Portal does not provide specific information on employment in the construction industry, it does cover regulated and non-regulated occupations.⁵ In particular, the following information is available:

- Brief description of the types of regulated professions, apprentice-able trades, and non-regulated occupations in Canada.
- List of 45 Red Seal trades with links to National Occupational Analyses, Ellis Charts and, in some cases, Essential Skills Profiles.
- Contact information for provincial and territorial apprenticeship offices (list is searchable by province/territory).
- Link to the Work Destinations website (www.workdestinations.org) sponsored by the Forum of Labour Market Ministers.
- Overview of credential assessment for regulated and non-regulated occupations and links to the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials, the Association of Canadian Community Colleges, and Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada.

The CIC has also developed Integration-Net (<http://integration-net.cic.gc.ca/>) as a “communications, information, and research tool to support the work of the Canadian settlement community.” Its mandate is to provide information and advice to help newcomers settle, adapt, and integrate into Canadian society.

2.2. CANADIAN INFORMATION CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL CREDENTIALS

The Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC) “collects, organizes, and distributes information, and acts as a national clearing house and referral service to support the recognition and portability of Canadian and international educational and occupational qualifications.”⁶ The home page of the CICIC website (www.cicic.ca) lists seven main topics:

- Credential Evaluations;
- Education in Canada;
- Professions and Trades;
- Learning Canada’s Languages;
- Exchanges and Financial Aid;
- Education Abroad; and
- International Mobility.

Information on foreign credential assessment and recognition is presented in *Fact Sheet No. 2: Assessment and Recognition of Credentials for the Purpose of Employment in Canada*. The fact sheet is general in nature and does not address employment in specific sectors or occupations. It is in a Q&A format (13 Q&As) and available in English and French. The key areas addressed are:

- The difference between regulated and non-regulated occupations;

⁵ www.canadainternational.gc.ca/gtc/Types_of_work_in_Canada-en.aspx

⁶ www.cicic.ca/about.en.stm

Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC) is
*“responsible for providing all Canadians with the tools they need
to thrive and prosper in the workplace and community.”*

- The definition of a trade and a Red Seal trade;
- How, when and by whom qualifications and credentials are assessed and recognized for regulated and non-regulated occupations; and
- Potential information sources for employment and other topics including immigration and education.

As well, the fact sheet describes, and has a link to, the CICIC on-line employment information database for 180 professions and trades. The database is searchable by occupational title, regulated/non-regulated/Red Seal occupations, and skill type. The database provides the following employment information for 16 construction-related occupations and trades:

- Brief description of the Inter-provincial Standards Real Seal program and contact information for the Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship (CCDA);
- General discussion on compulsory and voluntary trade certification;
- Links to contact information for provincial credential assessment and evaluation services;
- Link to Human Resources and Social Development Canada’s (HRSDC’s) description of occupational duties and employment requirements;
- Links to occupational profiles available from various provincial/territorial websites; and
- Contact information for apprenticeship, training, and trade certification offices by province.

The fact sheets are, in general, the same for each of the 16 construction trades. The occupational profiles provide trade-specific information but do not reference foreign-trained workers.

In addition, the CICIC website has a separate page with links to immigration information. The links are to the CIC provincial nomination program, CIC listing of Canadian Immigration offices abroad, Foreign Affairs listing of embassies, consulates, and provincial immigration offices.

2.3. HUMAN RESOURCES AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT CANADA

Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC) is *“responsible for providing all Canadians with the tools they need to thrive and prosper in the workplace and community.”*⁷ HRSDC assists in the employment of foreign-trained workers by providing labour market opinions for temporary worker applications, processing applications for Social Insurance Numbers and conveying information on a number of employment-related topics.

The HRSDC website has a specific page devoted to non-Canadians and immigrants (www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/gateways/individuals/audiences/nsm.shtml). This page provides topic links to career planning, financial benefits, human resources management, jobs, labour and workplace information, partnership initiatives and funding programs, social insurance number, and training and learning. Again, the information is not occupation or sector specific.

⁷ www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/cs/comm/hrsd/about_us.shtml



2.4. WORK DESTINATIONS, FORUM OF LABOUR MARKET MINISTERS

“The Work Destinations website is a comprehensive source of information on regulated trades and professions in Canada. It contains information on entry requirements in both official languages and is the only site designed primarily for professional or trades people moving within Canada. It also provides information for persons considering immigration to Canada.”⁸

The website is being updated but at report writing time it was organized into three areas:

- General information on regulated and non-regulated occupations, licensure examinations, and the re-licensing process for those moving inter-provincially or immigrating to Canada;

- An on-line searchable database of the provincial/territorial certification requirements for regulated professions and trades; and
- Links to information on labour markets, immigration, and living in Canada.

The database covers roughly 38 construction trades and 112 professions and other trades within the ten provinces and two territories (Northwest Territories and Yukon). The database provides general information on mandatory and voluntary certification, apprenticeship, the Red Seal program, and the recognition of qualifications obtained from other provinces and outside the country. As well, the database provides contact information for provincial government training and apprenticeship offices.

“The Work Destinations website is a comprehensive source of information on regulated trades and professions in Canada. It contains information on entry requirements in both official languages and is the only site designed primarily for professional or trades people moving within Canada. It also provides information for persons considering immigration to Canada.”

⁸ Home page, www.workdestinations.org

The following describes specific provincial initiatives targeting newcomers and potential immigrants for employment in the construction industry.

3.1. ONTARIO

Government of Ontario

In 1995, the Ontario government established the Access to Professions and Trades Initiative with the mandate to mitigate barriers to licensure and certification in the professions and trades. As part of the initiative, the government developed a web page *Opening Doors for Internationally Trained Individuals* (<http://www.citizenship.gov.on.ca/english/citdiv/apt/index.html>). The page delves into academic credential assessment, bridge training programs,⁹ and licensing and has downloadable career maps and e-fact sheets.

The career maps and e-fact sheets target prospective immigrants and newcomers to Ontario. The career maps provide information on certification and licensing requirements, requisite competencies, language requirements, the application and assessment process, fees and costs, a summary of labour market conditions and a listing of contacts. The career maps are available for 22 professions and 12 trades (including construction and maintenance electricians, plumbers and sheet metal workers). The six e-fact sheets provide a user-directed explanation for every stage of the licensure process in Ontario.

In March 2006, the Ontario government also launched an immigration website (www.ontarioimmigration.ca) targeting potential and newly arrived immigrants. The

website, using both icons and words to guide the visitor, is organized as follows:

- Welcome to Ontario – Message from Ontario's Premier (available in 15 languages);
- Before You Arrive (links to information on how to apply, documents needed, working in a profession or trade, finding a job, and for international students);
- After You Arrive (links to information on first days, housing, schools, health care and starting a business);
- Guides for Living, Working, Doing Business, Studying;
- About Ontario – People & Culture, Weather & Geography, Cities & Towns and Visiting Ontario; and
- What's New.

For details on working in a profession or trade, there are links to a website for newcomers (www.settlement.org), a recently launched site (www.211Ontario.ca), and back to the government's Access to Professions and Trades (APT) initiative website.

Immigrant Settlement and Other Agencies

Settlement.org¹⁰ has developed a series of occupation-specific workshops to orient newcomers to employment in Ontario. The workshop manual – *Steps to Employment in Construction* – is available at <http://www.settlement.org/steps/manuals.html>. The 97-page manual covers a number of topics including

⁹ Scheduled to commence in October 2006, training programs for newcomers will be available for 200 general carpenters and for 50 management positions in construction.

¹⁰ An initiative of the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants funded by the Ontario government and CIC.



the construction industry, the construction workplace, construction occupations, workplace law in Ontario, training and upgrading, equipment and tools, common construction vocabulary, communication and health and safety.

A 211Ontario.ca¹¹ website references a 15-page guide to working in the professions and trades in Ontario. The guide was prepared by Findhelp Information Services and funded by the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities.

Lastly, COSTI Immigrant Services and Skills for Change are two prominent organizations providing immigrant services to newcomers in Ontario. COSTI has a number of initiatives specifically targeting those interested in trades employment:

- The Newcomers Connecting to Trades Apprenticeship Resources (NeCTAR) initiative has designed information materials and tools to help newcomers access the Ontario Apprenticeship Program. The information is available for service providers of community-based agencies and will be available in a downloadable format in the near future. As well, NeCTAR provides skilled trade workshops on how to become a certified tradesperson in Ontario.
- The Centre for Foreign Trained Professionals and Tradespeople is operated by COSTI and Humber College and funded by HRSDC. The centre helps find employment for individuals in their fields of expertise.
- SkillsInternational.ca is an on-line database of pre-screened skilled international candidates seeking employment in Ontario. The website

launched in March 2006 and is the first of its kind in Canada.

The Skills for Change¹² agency offers a number of sector-specific information sessions for engineers, engineering technicians, technologists, accountants, and teachers trained outside Canada. As well, the Bridge to Success for Trades Program helps newcomers prepare for the workplace and their Certificate of Qualification exam.

Home Builders' Association

In 2001, the Greater Toronto Home Builders' Association (GTHBA) entered into a sectoral agreement with the federal government (HRSDC and CIC) to address worker shortages in the Ontario construction industry. The agreement allows for the temporary entry of qualified¹³ foreign construction workers to address shortages in nine trades: bricklayers, carpenters, cement finishers, construction labourers, form workers, framers, installers, drywallers and tile setters. Over the last five years, 350 temporary workers have participated in the Construction Recruitment External Worker Services (CREWS) program.

Acting as a liaison between government and employers, CREWS helps employers prepare job offers and foreign-worker applications for HRSDC labour market opinions. Though CREWS does not work directly with foreign workers, the website (www.constructionworkers.ca) provides some basic employment information relating to Social Insurance Numbers, the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP), English as a Second Language and safety training.

¹¹ A service of Findhelp and Community Information Online Consortium.

¹² www.skillsforchange.org/

¹³ Minimum of five years of verifiable work experience and approved by Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

3.2. BRITISH COLUMBIA

Government of British Columbia

The Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services has prepared a fact sheet to help internationally trained professionals and trades people integrate into the British Columbia labour market. The fact sheet entitled *Your Roadmap to Recognition in British Columbia*¹⁴ covers nine topics but does not have specific employment information for the construction industry.

The Industry Training Authority (ITA), a provincial government agency, is responsible for governing and developing the industry training system in B.C. The ITA website (www.itabc.ca) has a web page targeting new residents. The page provides an overview of the industry training system and describes placement and challenge examinations, Red Seal trade credentials, and industry career options.

The provincial government is involved in various pilots and initiatives focused on the employment of foreign-trained immigrants. The Ministry of Economic Development just recently announced the introduction of the British Columbia Skills Connect for Immigrants Program. The program aims to expedite the employment of highly skilled immigrants in the construction, transportation, energy, tourism, and hospitality industries. Activities will include career assessment and planning, workplace language upgrading and orientation, skill enhancements, as well as mentoring.

Immigrant Settlement and Other Agencies

The Immigrant Services Society (ISS) of British Columbia and MOSAIC have produced fact sheets

targeting internationally educated immigrants interested in information on how to register and practice in a regulated occupation in British Columbia. The summaries cover requirements for registration, estimated time, and costs associated with the registration process, how the registration process works, job prospects, contact information, and a glossary of terms. Thus far, fact sheets are available for internationally educated nurses, teachers, accountants, and engineers in select languages (including English, French, Hindi, Chinese, Punjabi, Russian and Farsi).

A number of agencies are working together to develop a more coordinated approach towards the labour market integration of immigrants. The Employment Access Strategy for Immigrants (EASI), which involves a broad range of stakeholders, ensures that services for immigrants are available and easily accessible. One EASI initiative is a portal to information, programs, and services for immigrant employment in British Columbia (www.lookingahead.bc.ca).

Construction Associations

In March 2006, the Vancouver Regional Construction Association (VRCA) together with several Vancouver employers travelled to Germany, England, and Scotland to raise awareness of construction employment opportunities available in Canada and the need for skilled labour, and to connect with skilled workers. The VRCA participated in five career fairs with a focus on recruiting journeyman-level employees for construction work related to the 2010 Winter Olympics and other major infrastructure projects. Seventy resumes were collected from a wide cross section of trades.

¹⁴ www.ecdev.gov.bc.ca/ProgramsAndServices/IQU/pdf_files/01_MovingtoBC.pdf



To facilitate skilled immigrants' access to employment opportunities in the construction industry, S.U.C.C.E.S.S.¹⁵ together with the British Columbia Construction Association (BCCA) have established a construction trades contact network. To be part of the network, individuals fill out an on-line questionnaire (www.success.bc.ca/sti/construction_survey.htm) and are contacted about new employment or training opportunities.

The BCCA, in partnership with the CSC, is also involved in the Immigrant Skilled Trades Employment Program (ISTEP). The program is designed to promote and increase the employment of landed immigrants in the construction industry. Started in January 2006 and to be completed in August 2008, the ISTEP "*will address the current lack of employment, commensurate with the skills, education, and/or experience, for newly landed immigrants within the construction sector and helps to address current and future labour needs of both the immigrant community and the construction industry.*"¹⁶

3.3. ALBERTA

Government of Alberta

The Economic Immigration Branch of Alberta Economic Development has been involved in a number of Euromission Immigration Events. These events focus on matching European skilled workers with specific job opportunities in Alberta. In March 2006, representatives of the Alberta government and employers attended emigration and job fair events held in the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and Belgium. The focus of the United Kingdom visit was

on raising awareness of Alberta as a preferred emigration destination. In Germany, three job fairs were held with roughly 1,500 pre-screened skilled truck drivers and workers in the metal, woodworking, construction and heavy duty mechanical trades. Pre-screened skilled workers also attended the Destination Canada event held in France and Belgium.

In March 2006, the immigration branch published *Useful Websites for Skilled Workers & Employers* for distribution at the Euromission events. The 29-page publication lists on-line information resources in the areas of immigration, federal and provincial government programs and services, foreign worker readiness programs, moving to Alberta/Settlement Services, employment standards, and agriculture. The publication is also downloadable from the Alberta Economic Development website (www.alberta-canada.com/albertaimmigrationPromotion/files/pdf/UsefulWebsitesSkilledWorkersEmployers_Oct2006.pdf).

To support employers participating in Euromissions, the government also posts (www.alberta-canada.com/jobs/index.cfm) employment opportunities for skilled workers. The *Employment Opportunity Information* forms provide employer contact information, a description of the employer, the details of the job offer and a summary of the certification/licensing/registration requirements. The website currently has employment opportunities postings in the construction industry.

In 2004, the Alberta Resources and Employment department published *Working in Alberta: A Guide for Internationally Trained and Educated Immigrants*. The 77-page document covers the recognition of international qualifications, the registration and

¹⁵ Founded in 1973 and incorporated in 1974 as a non-profit charitable organization, S.U.C.C.E.S.S. is now one of the largest immigration and social service agencies in British Columbia. www.success.bc.ca/eng/

¹⁶ Request for Proposal for a Marketing Specialist, Page 2. www.bccasn.com/jobpostings.html

A guide for new immigrants, *Images of Edmonton*, scheduled for distribution in September 2006, will present information on why Edmonton is “the best place to work, prosper, live and plan.”

certification process, occupational information, career management, job search skills and the labour market. Information on employment in the construction industry is limited to how to research a trade in Alberta and a listing of regulated trades.

Offered through Bow Valley College and funded through Alberta Human Resources and Employment and the Government of Canada, Directions for Immigrants in Trades and Professional Careers (DITPC) is a free career service that assists foreign-trained skilled immigrants to restart their careers in Calgary. The website (<http://ditpc.ca/>) has information on the construction industry in Calgary and occupational information for 22 construction trades. The DITPC also offers industry specific career workshops to assist immigrants.

Economic Development Corporation

The Edmonton Economic Development Corporation (EEDC)¹⁷ is launching the Edmonton Workforce Connection in response to growing skill and labour shortages in Greater Edmonton. Initiatives that specifically target immigrants are:

- The introduction, scheduled for May 30, 2006, of a labour attraction website linking immigrants to existing job banks. The website (<http://www.movetoedmonton.com>) will also feature a video of recent immigrants.
- The co-ordination of targeted immigration missions to Germany, France and the United Kingdom, and a pilot project attracting immigrants from another country outside Europe. These missions are intended to take place over the next 12 months.

- A guide for new immigrants, *Images of Edmonton*, scheduled for distribution in September 2006, will present information on why Edmonton is “the best place to work, prosper, live and plan.” It will be available in a variety of languages. Similar guides are currently available in Vancouver, Toronto, and Calgary.

3.4. QUÉBEC

Government of Québec

Unlike the other provinces, the government of Québec takes responsibility for recruitment and selection of immigrants (with the exception of family class immigrants and refugees). As part of this arrangement, the province has established eight offices¹⁸ outside Canada and one in Québec to provide information and advice to potential newcomers. The government provides information to those interested in immigrating to the province in the following ways:

- The Ministère de l’Immigration et des Communautés culturelles (MICC) website (<http://www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/anglais/index.html>) provides immigration information;
- A website portal is devoted to the topic of immigration (<http://www.gouv.qc.ca/wps/portal/pgs/international/>);

¹⁷ www.edmonton.com/

¹⁸ Located in Buenos Aires, Damascus, Hong Kong, Brussels, New York, Mexico, Paris and Vienna.

- Information Service on Regulated Professions¹⁹ (Service d'information sur les professions réglementées – SIPR) is an internet-based information service with one-on-one counselling available for those interested in pursuing employment in one of over 50 regulated occupations;
- Information sessions are offered in Europe and South America to target prospective permanent workers;
- An on-line service provides a preliminary assessment of immigration eligibility;
- An on-line guide provides information on immigration procedures (only available in French);
- An on-line database provides customized labour market information (for a guided tour refer to http://imt.emploiquebec.net/mtg/inter/noncache/contenu/asp/mtg941_accueil_angl_01.asp); and
- A comparative evaluation of studies completed outside Québec.

Specific information is available on regulated trades in the construction industry. The SIPR provides detailed information on the process for entering a regulated trade. The details include the legal and regulatory framework in Québec, the apprenticeship process, competency certificates, and provincial qualification exams. As well, the on-line service has links to fact sheets, in French only, for 26 regulated trades.

Construction Commission

The Commission de la construction du Québec (CCQ) has a separate web page (http://www.ccq.org/G_ExterieurQuebec.aspx?lang=en&profil=Travailleur) entitled *If You Come From Outside Québec*. Prospective immigrants are encouraged to contact the CCQ's customer service office for further information or to start the competency certification process.

3.5. OTHER PROVINCIAL INITIATIVES

Although 96% of immigrants²⁰ who work in the construction industry reside in the four provinces – Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta and Québec – there is a Canada-wide recognition that foreign-trained workers play an important role in the success of the construction industry. Other provinces and territories are making strides towards providing information to those interested in employment in the construction industry. At present, these initiatives include:

- Manitoba Labour and Immigration consulted with select regulatory bodies in the preparation of fact sheets for 65 regulated occupations and trades in Manitoba. As well, the department has a web page about “*access to trades in Manitoba*” (<http://www.gov.mb.ca/labour/immigrate/newcomerservices/7c.html>)
- In May 2003, the PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada published a report entitled *Stepping Stones to Success – Recognizing Foreign Credentials and Qualifications in Prince Edward Island*. The 64-page report includes a page on apprenticeship for trade occupations.

¹⁹ www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/anglais/settlement/sipr.html

²⁰ Statistics Canada, Census 2001.

CREDENTIAL ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION SERVICES

In Canada, credential recognition assessment and evaluation services are available for prospective and new immigrants. There are five provincially mandated bodies abiding by principals of good practice consistent with international standards:

- International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS), Alberta;
- International Credential Evaluation Service (ICES), British Columbia;
- Academic Credentials Assessment Services (ACAS), Manitoba;
- World Education Services-Canada (WES Canada), Ontario; and
- Education Credentials Evaluation (Service des évaluations comparatives d'études – SECE), Québec.

The following briefly describes the services offered by one of the largest services in Canada, namely World Education Services.

WES fosters the integration of individuals educated in foreign countries into academic and professional settings. As the largest international credential evaluation service in North America, WES works with both individual applicants as well as with educational institutions, immigration lawyers, businesses, and occupational regulatory bodies.

In 2000, WES became Ontario's mandated provider of credential evaluation services for immigrants, employers, academic institutions, and occupational regulatory bodies. WES provides two types of credential evaluation reports (available in English or French):

- A *Document-by-Document* report describes each credential (including the country, name and year of credential, name of educational institution, admission requirements, length of program and major specialization) and identifies the Canadian equivalency for each document. The cost of the report is C\$115.
- A *Course-by-Course* report provides credential document information as well as a list of all subjects completed at the post-secondary level, semester credit, and grade equivalent for each course and a Canadian grade average. The report costs C\$200.

As well, WES provides the following services:

- Workshops on international credential evaluation methods and procedures, international recruitment strategies and country educational systems;
- A portal (WES Resources <http://www.wes.org/ca/resources.asp>) that provides free access to international education resources; and
- An on-line system (AccessWES system) to review, track progress and receive evaluation reports.

WES has provided services to clients in the construction industry including George Brown College, Interior Finishing Centre Systems Training Centre, and the Ontario Apprenticeship Branch, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. WES has been working with the Apprenticeship Branch to establish entrance requirements for apprenticeship training programs by evaluating formal academic programs and providing the equivalency to secondary school.

The government is working with regulatory bodies, sector councils, and provincial governments *“to develop better processes for assessing and recognizing foreign credentials that are fair, accessible, coherent, transparent and rigorous.”*

This section contains information on the ways other sectors and occupations in Canada and elsewhere provide information to potential and actual immigrants.

5.1. ENGINEERING

Human Resources and Social Development Canada is responsible for implementing the Government of Canada's Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR) Program.²¹ The government is working with regulatory bodies, sector councils, and provincial governments *“to develop better processes for assessing and recognizing foreign credentials that are fair, accessible, coherent, transparent and rigorous.”*²² Initially, the focus was on regulated occupations – physicians, nurses, and engineers. Now efforts have been initiated in non-regulated occupations including tourism, textiles, software technology and aviation maintenance.

The program firstly involves a diagnostic to determine what processes will help meet the objectives of the FCR program. At this point, the FCR program for engineers is the only one past the diagnostic stage and at the implementation phase.

The Canadian Foundation for Economic Education (CFEE) created the Potential to Prosperity website (www.cfeep2p.com) to help Canada's engineering regulated profession reach newcomers with relevant information related to credential assessment and recognition in Canada. The website informs newcomers using the following communication tools:

- Case studies on the real life experiences of 17 immigrants are shared via on-line videos.
- As well, on-line videos and links communicate how to obtain an engineering license in Canada. Six videos cover the topics: (1) Engineering in Canada: A Regulated Profession; (2) The Licensure Process in Canada; (3) The Professional Practice Exam; (4) Language and Cultural Challenges; (5) Hiring Internationally Educated Engineers: The Employers' Perspective; and (6) Getting Your First Job in Canada.
- Links to other information sources.

The CFEE intends to provide similar information for other occupations including physicians, nurses, and other health-related occupations.

As well, the CFEE developed a 247-page *Newcomers to Canada* day planner and companion website for recent and potential immigrants to Canada to provide information on foreign credential assessment and recognition processes, the Canadian labour market and career development. The day planner provides space for scheduling activities as well as information on various topics including government, dates to remember, money matters, careers, business information and education and training. The *Newcomers to Canada* website (<http://www.cfeedayplanner.com/>) provides links to information referenced in the day planner and downloadable sections of the day planner.

²¹ As part of the federal government's Internationally Trained Worker Initiative, the government created the Foreign Credential Recognition program.

²² www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/cs/comm/hrsd/news/2005/050425bg.shtml

The Canadian Council of Professional Engineers (CCPE) also received funding to determine ways to more quickly and efficiently integrate international engineering graduates into the Canadian labour market. With this objective in mind, the council conducted research and developed a database of foreign institutions offering degrees in engineering.

5.2. ARCHITECTS

The Ontario Association of Architects (OAA) has prepared a 12-page career map describing the steps required for architectural licensing and certification in Ontario. Of particular interest is that the OAA structured a task force to look at potential initiatives to integrate Internationally-trained Professionals (ITP) into the profession. In the area of communication, the OAA had the following recommendations:²³

- *Develop an information package on the qualities and skills that employers seek in ITP applicants;*
- *Simplify language of licensing requirements for ITPs;*
- *Publish success stories of ITPs who have succeeded in integrating into the profession; and*
- *Educate employers on the advantages of hiring ITPs and on support programs and advisory services available to employers and ITPs.*

5.3. HEALTH CARE SECTOR

The Ontario Network for International Professionals (ONIP) website (ONIP.ca) is an on-line source of

information on the employment and licensing process for internationally trained health care professionals, as well as engineers, teachers and accountants. The website describes the role of sector councils and has employment information including occupational duties, qualifications and requirements, compensation, employers, job prospects and links to professional associations. The information on the licensing process includes links to get started, a glossary of terms, and an overview of the process.

In 2005, the Association of International Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (AIPSO) launched the Canadian Information Centre for International Medical Graduates (www.img-canada.ca). As a central information resource, the site provides information on medical licensure in Canada, access to licensure by province/territory, health care system, Canadian medical practices, medical links, alternative careers in health care and immigration and settlement.

As well, the Medical Council of Canada has developed an on-line tool (<https://www.mcc.ca/SelfAssessment/english/Introduction.html>) to help international medical graduates determine their readiness to apply for licensure in Canada.

In addition to these initiatives, the Ontario government recently launched a new health human resources strategy.²⁴ The strategy proposes the creation of a one-stop centre for internationally educated health professionals to obtain the information they need to work in Ontario. As well, the government intends to establish a marketing and recruitment centre including a comprehensive job portal.

²³ Final Report of the Internationally trained Professionals Task Group, January 20, 2005. www.oaa.on.ca

²⁴ www.health.gov.on.ca/english/media/



Outside of Canada, there is an interesting government-led initiative in Australia. DoctorConnect (www.doctorconnect.gov.au) has a mandate to “provide a starting point for both overseas trained doctors (OTD) who may be considering working in Australia and for employers seeking to recruit them.” Some aspects of the website include:

- Information is tailored for two audiences – the employee and the employer;
- Information is occupation-specific;
- Links are imbedded within the text;
- The site is organized by topic rather than by organization; and
- Personal stories about overseas trained doctors working in Australia are included.

5.4. TRADE OCCUPATIONS IN CONSTRUCTION

The Australian government is re-launching an upgraded website covering the topic of trades recognition for skilled immigrants. The website, which will be available on June 1, 2006, will “provide better access to information and resources in a user-friendly language and format.”²⁵

The Australian government also provides the following on-line information and services for skilled immigrants:

- Country Education Profiles (CEP) are guides for assessing overseas qualifications in relation to Australian qualifications; and
- Educational Qualifications Assessment Online service enables the receipt of applications to assess educational qualifications gained overseas.

In New Zealand, the main immigration government website (www.immigration.govt.nz) has an employment fact sheet for construction. The sheet has a brief industry profile together with a listing of professional, industry association, training, and employment websites. There is also a listing of recognized educational institutions by country, a notice of future licensing requirements and a personal story of an immigrant securing employment in the carpentry/joiner trade.

As well, the government has created a government portal (www.worksite.govt.nz) about job training and employment in New Zealand. There is a separate page entitled the Construction Industry – Helping to Build New Zealand. The page provides links to information on the general industry, training and skill development, registration and licensing, and finding a job. Of particular interest, are the following links:

- The Construction Industry Council (www.nzcic.co.nz) has prepared a fact sheet on injury prevention within the construction industry;

²⁵ www.workplace.gov.au/workplace/category/schemesinitiatives/TRA

- ACC Safer Industries (www.acc.co.nz) has published a WorkInsight article on the skills shortage issue;
- The Department of Building and Housing (www.building.dbh.govt.nz) provides information about the Building Act and the Building Code;
- A government website (www.kiwicareers.govt.nz) provides job-specific information on employment opportunities and market trends; and
- A Construction Industry Council membership list includes most, if not all, of the construction industry organizations in New Zealand.

Lastly, the Auckland Chamber of Commerce has established a website (www.newkiwis.co.nz) to link skilled immigrants with the needs of the Small Medium Enterprise sector and funds a work-experience program for new immigrants. The website has registered 3,000 immigrants including those involved in the construction industry and has matched 1,000 immigrants to an employer. The site also provides job search strategies to guide immigrants.

The website, which will be available on June 1, 2006, will
*“provide better access to information and resources in
a user-friendly language and format.”*

The following summarizes the key findings of the review of information currently available for prospective and actual immigrants.

6.1. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Citizenship and Immigration Canada is the primary source of information on immigration to Canada. The CIC is a starting point for most prospective immigrants and from there, immigrants are directed to various organizations for further information. The research reviewed most, though not all, of these sources and determined that there is not a central source of information for immigrants interested in pursuing employment in the Canadian construction industry.

6.2. TYPES OF INFORMATION

The type of information targeting prospective and current immigrants is diverse. The research found that immigration information is most commonly available in the following ways:

- Brief descriptions of key immigration topics;
- Self-assessment tools to determine immigration eligibility;
- Guides/publications on settling in Canada;
- Occupational profiles, career maps and e-fact sheets;
- Career workshop manuals;
- Searchable databases;
- Videos on real life experiences of recent immigrants;
- Lists of primary contacts; and
- Links to other websites.

6.3. INFORMATION AVAILABLE FOR SPECIFIC OCCUPATIONS/SECTORS

The research also identified what information is currently available for immigrants interested in working in a specific occupation or sector. In review, the research found that the following information is available:

- Description of compulsory and voluntary trade certification in Canada;
- General information on apprenticeship and Red Seal trades;
- Occupational profiles;
- Description of provincial/territorial certification requirements for regulated trades;
- General labour market information;
- General information on certification and licensing requirements; and
- Contact information for provincial/territorial apprenticeship offices and credential assessment and evaluation services.

Organizations in British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario and Québec provide immigrants with the following information:

- Settlement.org, Ontario – Overview of the construction industry, the construction workplace, construction occupations, workplace law in Ontario, training and upgrading, equipment and tools, common construction vocabulary, communication and health and safety.
- CREWS, Ontario – Some basic employment information relating to Social Insurance Numbers, the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP), English as a Second Language and safety training.

It is noted that some of this information is available on a provincial, but not national, level.

- DITPC, Alberta – General information on the construction industry in Calgary and occupational information for 22 trades in construction.
- Québec – Information on the legal and regulatory framework in Québec, the apprenticeship process, competency certificates, and provincial qualification exams.

As well, prospective immigrants who participate in targeted immigration missions in select countries are apprised of construction and employment opportunities in Canada. On a provincial level, the Alberta Government posts employment opportunities in the construction industry and immigrants who are part of the Construction Trades Contact Network are advised of employment or training opportunities in British Columbia.

6.4. ACCESSIBILITY

With the exception of Québec, most of the available information is on-line, accessibility of information is reliant on one having access to the Internet and experience “surfing the web.” As well, some websites are difficult to navigate and have other limitations. For instance, CIC conducted two on-line surveys²⁶ to assess client satisfaction with their website. The surveys identified improvements in the areas of content, posting timeliness, language levels and ease of navigation.

6.5. INFORMATION GAPS

For those interested in employment in the construction industry, there is little or no information available on the following topics:

- Employment and construction opportunities in the construction industry;
- Labour market conditions as well as prevailing pay rates;
- Canadian health and safety regulations;
- Canadian construction processes;
- Building codes and regulatory requirements;
- Workplace requirements;
- Roles and responsibilities of tradespersons;
- Role of unions;
- Specific details on the licensure process in Canada;
- Language and cultural challenges; and
- Case studies on real life experiences of immigrants in the construction industry.

It is noted that some of this information is available on a provincial, but not national, level. In fact, existing Canada-wide sources provide some information in a very general way and reference website links for more details. In many of these cases, however, the linked website does not have a specific page tailored to the information needs of immigrants.

²⁶ In total, 3,282 visitors completed the survey between February 9 and March 15, 2005 and 779 employees completed the survey between March 8 and March 22, 2005. www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/cic-site-eval.html



6.6. LESSONS LEARNED

The challenge facing the CSC is to design an information delivery system that targets individuals who speak different languages, use different terminology, and reside in various countries throughout the world. The research found a few examples of information sources that specifically target foreign-trained workers in a specific field. Some common approaches have:

- A central portal of information;
- Two information paths, one tailored for employees and the other for employers;
- User-friendly language and commonly understood terminology;
- Fact sheets available in a variety of languages;
- Searchable information databases;
- Downloadable and interactive tools and resources;
- Personal life stories; and
- Ways for people to network such as on-line chat rooms.

It is recommended that CSC consider adopting some, if not all, of these common approaches. As well, the new Australian government website to be launched on June 1, 2006 will likely be worthy of consideration.

It is also recommended that the main on-line sources of immigration information provide a link to the CSC website and concisely describe the purpose of the website. Conversely, the CSC will need to ensure it has links to websites that provide relevant and up-to-date information.

The CSC could also have an in-house contact person available to provide further information and support for those using the website. If the CSC decides to target immigrants in specific countries then they could establish a network of contacts from various immigration agencies and educate them on the main features of the website.

APPENDIX I:

REFERENCES

Alberta Economic Development. (March 2006). *Useful Websites for Skilled Workers & Employers.*

Business Council of British Columbia. (January 31, 2006). *Foreign Credential Recognition for Skilled Immigrants to British Columbia: Looking Beneath, Above, and Beyond.*

Construction Sector Council. (Summer 2005). *A Study of Assessment and Recognition of Foreign-Trained Worker Credentials in the Construction Industry.*

Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Associations (MISA). (March 2004). *Labour Market Attachment Needs of Immigrants in Nova Scotia.*

The Canadian Alliance of Education and Training Organizations. (April 2004). *Foreign Credential Recognition: An Overview of Practice in Canada.*

APPENDIX II:

WORLD WIDE WEB SOURCES

NATIONAL

- Canada International: www.canadainternational.gc.ca
- Canadian Foundation for Economic Education (CFEE) – Newcomers to Canada: <http://www.cfeedayplanner.com/>
- Canadian Foundation for Economic Education (CFEE) – Potential to Prosperity: www.cfeep2p.com
- Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC): www.cicic.ca
- Canadian Information Centre for International Medical Graduates: www.img-canada.ca
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada: www.cic.gc.ca
- Going to Canada (GTC) Immigration Portal: www.directioncanada.gc.ca
- Going to Canada (GTC) Immigration Portal, Types of Work: www.canadainternational.gc.ca/gtc/Types_of_work_in_Canada-en.aspx
- Government of Canada: www.canada.gc.ca
- Human Resources and Social Development Canada: www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/gateways/individuals/audiences/ncm.shtml
- Integration-Net: <http://integration-net.cic.gc.ca/>
- Medical Council of Canada: www.mcc.ca/SelfAssessment/english/Introduction.html
- Skills for Change: www.skillsforchange.org/
- Work Destinations, sponsored by the Forum of Labour Market Ministers: www.workdestinations.org
- World Education Services-Canada: www.wes.org

PROVINCIAL

Alberta

- Alberta Economic Development: www.alberta-canada.com/albertaimmigrationPromotion/files/pdf/UsefulWebsitesSkilledWorkersEmployers_Oct2006.pdf
- Directions for Immigrants in Trades and Professional Careers (DITPC): <http://ditpc.ca/>
- Edmonton Economic Development Corporation (EEDC): www.edmonton.com/
- Employment Opportunity Information: www.alberta-canada.com/jobs/index.cfm
- Move to Edmonton: <http://www.movetoedmonton.com>

British Columbia

- British Columbia Construction Association: www.bccasn.com/jobpostings.html
- Employment Access Strategy for Immigrants (EASI): www.lookingahead.bc.ca
- Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia: www.issbc.org
- Industry Training Authority of British Columbia: www.itabc.ca

- Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services, *Moving to BC*: www.ecdev.gov.bc.ca/ProgramsAndServices/IQU/pdf_files/01_MovingtoBC.pdf
- MOSAIC: www.mosaicbc.com
- S.U.C.C.E.S.S.: www.success.bc.ca/sti/construction_survey.htm

Manitoba

- Manitoba Labour and Immigration: www.gov.mb.ca/labour/immigrate/newcomerservices/7c.html

Ontario

- 211Ontario.ca: www.211Ontario.ca
- Construction Recruitment External Worker Services (CREWS): www.constructionworkers.ca
- COSTI Immigrant Services: www.costi.org/
- Ontario Immigration: www.ontarioimmigration.ca
- Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care: www.health.gov.on.ca/english/media/
- Ontario Association of Architects (OAA): www.oaa.on.ca
- Ontario Network for International Professionals: www.onip.ca
- Opening Doors for Internationally Trained Individuals: www.citizenship.gov.on.ca/english/citdiv/apt/index.html
- Settlement.org: www.settlement.org

- Settlement.org, *Steps to Employment in Construction*: www.settlement.org/steps/manuals.html
- SkillsInternational.ca: www.skillsinternational.ca/index-en.php

Québec

- Commission de la construction du Québec (CCQ) : http://www.ccq.org/G_ExterieurQuebec.aspx?lang=en&profil=Travailleur
- Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles (MICC): www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/anglais/index.html
- Québec International: www.gouv.qc.ca/wps/portal/pgs/international/
- Québec Labour Market Information: http://imt.emploi-quebec.net/mtg/inter/noncache/contenu/asp/mtg941_accueil_angl_01.asp
- Service d'information sur les professions réglementées (SIPR): www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/anglais/settlement/sipr.html

INTERNATIONAL

Australia

- DoctorConnect: www.doctorconnect.gov.au
- Trades Recognition Australia:
www.workplace.gov.au/workplace/category/schemesinitiatives/TRA

New Zealand

- ACC Safer Industries: www.acc.co.nz
- Auckland Chamber of Commerce:
www.newkiwis.co.nz
- Career Services: www.kiwicareers.govt.nz/
- Construction Industry Council: www.nzcic.co.nz
- Department of Building and Housing:
www.building.dbh.govt.nz
- Immigration New Zealand:
www.immigration.govt.nz
- WorkSite: www.worksite.govt.nz/