BRIEFING NOTE: For discussion

Advancing collaboration and harmonization in Canadian engineering regulation	
Purpose:	To inform and engage the Engineers Canada Board of Directors in a strategic discussion on advancing collaboration and harmonization among Canadian engineering regulators, and to identify actionable next steps for national alignment.
Link to the Strategic Plan / Purposes:	Strategic direction: Realizing a stronger federation Core purpose: Facilitating and fostering working relationships between and among the regulators Board responsibility: Engages with the Regulators and the broader engineering community to inform strategy, guide decision making and monitor outcomes
Link to Corporate Risk Profile:	Diminished national collaboration (Board risk)
Transparency:	Open session
Prepared by:	Pal Mann, P.Eng., CEO Group Chair and Engineers Nova Scotia CEO/Registrar
Presented by:	Pal Mann, P.Eng., CEO Group Chair and Engineers Nova Scotia CEO/Registrar Jeanette Southwood, P.Eng., Executive Vice President, Corporate Affairs and Strategic Partnerships

Background

- Canada's engineering regulatory system is decentralized, with 12 provincial and territorial regulators operating under distinct legislative mandates.
- Engineers Canada Engineers Canada's vision is to advance Canadian engineering through national collaboration.
- Increasing interprovincial mobility, technological change, and public trust imperatives have driven the need for harmonized standards and collaborative practices.
- The National Statement of Collaboration, signed in May 2024, formalizes a shared commitment to these goals.
- Key initiatives include the Competency-Based Assessment model, a national accreditation system, and ongoing efforts to align Continuing Professional Development (CPD) standards.

Discussion

- The workshop program outlines a 1-hour session designed to deepen understanding and generate practical strategies for collaboration. It includes a presentation, breakout discussions, and synthesis of insights.
- Core principles guiding this work include:
    - Respect for jurisdictional autonomy
    - Transparency and open communication
    - Mutual benefit and reciprocity

    - Consensus-based decision-making
    - Continuous improvement and public interest focus
- Barriers include legislative differences, resource disparities, and the complexity of consensus-building.
- Success factors include strong leadership, shared vision, and effective facilitation by Engineers Canada.

Questions for discussion

1. What do you perceive as the most significant barriers to collaboration and harmonization among regulators?
2. What criteria should guide Engineers Canada in prioritizing collaborative projects?
3. What practical steps can be taken to accelerate harmonization efforts?
4. How can Engineers Canada encourage ongoing regulator collaboration and harmonization over time?

Next steps

- Review and discuss insights from the workshop breakout sessions.
- Identify how the Board may collaborate with regulators to identify priority areas for harmonization in the 2025–2029 strategic cycle.
- Develop a roadmap for advancing CPD harmonization and other national initiatives.
- Consider how the Board and Regulators enable Engineers Canada's role as a facilitator and knowledge hub to support regulator-led implementation.

Appendices

- **Appendix 1:** Collaboration and Harmonization Principles in Engineering Regulation
- **Appendix 2:** National Collaboration and Harmonization in Canadian Engineering Regulation backgrounder

APPENDIX 1: COLLABORATION AND HARMONIZATION PRINCIPLES IN CANADIAN ENGINEERING REGULATION

Core Collaboration Principles

The principles guiding collaboration among Canadian engineering regulators and Engineers Canada are articulated in the National Statement of Collaboration and Engineers Canada's strategic plans. These principles ensure effective, transparent, and mutually beneficial cooperation across jurisdictions:

- **Shared Purpose and Goals**: All parties commit to advancing the engineering profession by working together to address national and international barriers, promote public safety, and increase regulatory efficiency.
- **Respect for Jurisdictional Autonomy**: Recognize and respect the legislative authority and priorities of each regulator while seeking common ground for harmonization.
- **Transparency and Open Communication**: Engage in open, transparent, and regular exchange of information, sharing best practices and challenges to foster trust and understanding.
- **Mutual Benefit and Reciprocity**: Collaborate where there are opportunities for mutual benefit, ensuring all parties gain from shared initiatives and resource pooling.
- **Consensus and Inclusivity**: Decisions on harmonization are made through consensus, with all regulators participating in identifying focus areas and agreeing on standards and practices.
- **Commitment to Relationship-Building**: Demonstrate commitment to collaborative relationships by proactively resolving differences and building understanding at all organizational levels.
- **Continuous Improvement**: Regularly evaluate collaboration efforts, identify barriers and success factors, and adjust approaches to strengthen outcomes.
- **Public Interest and Professional Integrity**: Uphold high standards of practice, protect the public, and foster an equitable and innovative engineering environment.

Harmonization Principles

Harmonization refers to the process of aligning regulatory requirements, practices, and processes across jurisdictions. Key principles include:

- **Consistency of Standards**: Strive for consistent academic, professional, and ethical standards for licensure and practice across all provinces and territories.
- **Collaboration on National Initiatives**: Work jointly on national agreements (e.g., accreditation, competency-based assessment) to ensure uniformity and mutual recognition.
- **Respect for Differences**: Acknowledge and accommodate differences in local contexts and priorities while seeking alignment where possible.

- **Efficiency and Resource Sharing**: Reduce duplication of effort by sharing resources, data, and best practices, leading to more efficient regulatory processes.

- **Adaptability**: Remain responsive to technological advances and emerging areas of practice by updating harmonized frameworks as needed.

In summary:
Collaboration and harmonization in Canadian engineering regulation are grounded in principles of respect, transparency, consensus, mutual benefit, and public interest, operationalized through formal agreements, regular communication, and a shared commitment to continuous

Sources

This document has been prepared using Perplexity AI, which drew from the following sources:

Engineers Canada. (n.d.).
Accreditation and competency-based assessment. Retrieved from https://engineerscanada.ca/accreditation/about-accreditation and https://engineerscanada.ca/competency-assessment

Engineers Canada. (n.d.).
Collaboration and Harmonization Agreement. Retrieved from https://engineerscanada.ca/regulatory-excellence/collaboration-and-harmonization-agreement

Engineers Canada. (2022).
A vision for collaboration: Engineers Canada 2022-2024 strategic plan. Retrieved from https://engineerscanada.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/2022-2024%20%20-%20A%20vision%20for%20collaboration.pdf

Engineers Canada. (2022-2024).
A vision for collaboration. Retrieved from https://engineerscanada.ca/about/governance/a-vision-for-collaboration

Engineers Canada. (2024, May 1).
Collaboration and Harmonization agreement. Retrieved from https://engineerscanada.ca/regulatory-excellence/collaboration-and-harmonization-agreement

Engineers Canada. (2024, May 23).
National Statement of Collaboration. Retrieved from https://engineerscanada.ca/sites/default/files/2024-05/National%20Statement%20of%20Collaboration.pdf

Engineers Canada. (2024, May 24).
Engineering regulators sign agreement to strengthen collaboration and harmonization. Retrieved from https://engineerscanada.ca/news-and-events/news/engineering-regulators-sign-agreement-to-strengthen-collaboration-and-harmonization

APPENDIX 2: NATIONAL COLLABORATION AND HARMONIZATION IN CANADIAN ENGINEERING REGULATION BACKGROUNDER

Overview

Canadian engineering regulation is a complex, multi-jurisdictional system. Each province and territory has its own engineering regulator with legislative authority, while Engineers Canada acts as a national body to facilitate collaboration and harmonization. This backgrounder summarizes the drivers, roles, mechanisms, and current initiatives relevant to national harmonization, providing the essential context for informed workshop participation.

Regulatory Structure in Canada

- **Provincial/Territorial Regulators**:
  Each regulator is established under provincial/territorial law and is responsible for licensing, standards, and discipline within its jurisdiction. Regulators are legally mandated to protect the public and uphold the integrity of the profession.

- **Engineers Canada**:
  Engineers Canada is the national organization representing the 12 regulators. It does not have legislative authority but facilitates and fosters working relationships between and among the regulators

Drivers for National Collaboration and Harmonization

- **Professional Mobility**:
  Engineers increasingly work across provincial and territorial borders, requiring mutual recognition of credentials and consistent standards to facilitate mobility.

- **Public Protection and Trust**:
  Consistent standards across jurisdictions help maintain public confidence in the engineering profession and ensure safety and reliability.

- **Technological and Regulatory Change**:
  The rapid evolution of technology and regulatory requirements necessitates coordinated responses to emerging issues, such as digital engineering practices and new areas of risk.

- **Efficiency and Resource Sharing**:
  Harmonization reduces duplication of effort, streamlines processes, and allows for the sharing of best practices and resources among regulators.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Regulators**:
  Are the primary decision-makers and implementers of harmonized standards. They must agree to and enact changes in their respective jurisdictions.

- **Engineers Canada**:
  Facilitates collaboration by providing infrastructure (meetings, working groups), convening discussions, acting as a knowledge hub, and supporting joint projects. It does not impose decisions or set regulatory policy unilaterally.

Mechanisms for Collaboration and Harmonization

- **National Statement of Collaboration**:
  A formal agreement between Engineers Canada and the regulators outlining shared principles and commitments to collaboration.

- **National Programs: Competency-Based Assessment Initiative – A successful Model driven by Regulators**
  A pan-Canadian project to harmonize the assessment of engineering competencies for licensure, improving consistency and transparency **National Accreditation System**:
  Engineers Canada manages the accreditation of Canadian engineering education programs, ensuring consistent academic standards nationwide.

- **Regular Forums and Officials Groups**:
  Engineers Canada convenes regulators for regular meetings, working groups, and digital collaboration to address national issues and share information.

Current Issues and Barriers

- **Jurisdictional Autonomy**:
  Regulators' legislative independence can create challenges for adopting harmonized standards, especially when local priorities or legal frameworks differ.

- **Varied Capacity and Resources**:
  Differences in regulator size and resources can affect the pace and extent of harmonization.

- **Consensus-Building**:
  Achieving agreement among 12 independent regulators requires sustained dialogue, trust, and compromise.

Recent and Ongoing Initiatives

- **National Accreditation System**:
  Ensures consistent standards for engineering education across Canada, supporting mutual recognition of academic credentials.

- **Competency-Based Assessment**:
  A harmonized approach to evaluating engineering experience and competencies for licensure, piloted and adopted by several regulators.

- **Environmental Engineering Standards**:
  National collaboration on environmental engineering standards as a case study in harmonized practice development.

- **Labour Mobility Agreements**:
  Implementation of the Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA) provisions to facilitate interprovincial mobility for engineers.

What Success Looks Like

- Clearly defined and agreed-upon focus areas for harmonization.

- Increased consistency and efficiency in regulatory practices.

- Enhanced sharing of resources, data, and best practices.

- Improved mobility for engineers and strengthened public trust.