

## THE ENGINEERING PROFESSION'S POSITION

- During the federal government's engineering-related procurements of goods and services it is essential to engage and consult with professional engineers, be they government-employed engineers or consultants, to ensure that Canadians receive the best possible value for goods and services that are safe and compliant with standards and codes.
- All engineering decisions that are required throughout the federal procurement process should be made by a professional engineer licensed with a provincial or territorial engineering regulatory body.
- Federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments should consult and collaborate with the engineering profession on government procurement decisions related to engineering for the benefit of public safety, the economy, and the environment, and for the well-being of communities across Canada.

### The challenge(s)

The Government of Canada is one of the largest public buyers of goods and services in Canada, purchasing approximately \$22 billion every year on behalf of federal departments and agencies.<sup>1</sup> The current competitive process aims to get the best value for Canadians while enhancing access, competition, and fairness. Most contracts awarded to small and medium enterprises are done on a competitive basis, making it the most common process used by the federal government.<sup>2</sup> The issue remains that there are large-scale collaboration gaps between the government and the regulated professions—specifically the engineering profession—in the current competitive and non-competitive procurement processes in Canada. These gaps often cause professional engineers to be excluded from making important engineering decisions.

Yet professional engineers have an important role to play within the procurement process in Canada. To protect public safety, economic interests, and the natural environment, Engineers Canada

strongly believes that professional engineers must be involved in:

1. Preparing engineering documents to be used for construction or project implementation.
2. Supervising projects.
3. Preparing tender agreements throughout the procurement process.
4. Assisting throughout the procurement process where engineering decisions are required.

Engineers also possess a deep understanding of life cycle costing pertaining to all four stages of the procurement process, from planning and acquisition to use and disposal. Life cycle costing is an approach that assesses the total cost of an asset over its life cycle including initial capital costs, maintenance costs, operating costs, and the asset's residual value at the end of its service.<sup>3</sup> Positive impacts that are associated with considering life cycle costs include reduced maintenance and operations costs, and increased

<sup>1</sup> Government of Canada – The Procurement Process (2020). <https://buyandsell.gc.ca/for-businesses/selling-to-the-government-of-canada/the-procurement-process>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Whole Building Design Guide (2016). "Life-Cycle Cost Analysis (LCCA)." <https://www.wbdg.org/resources/life-cycle-cost-analysis-lcca>.

life of an asset thereby reducing replacement costs. Life cycle costing is therefore critical since public infrastructure projects are long-term investments that are paid for with public funds.

## How Engineers Canada has contributed

Engineering decisions on procurement for projects and services must be made by professional engineers. Departments and agencies within the Government of Canada want the best value for their procurement project requirements. Engineering services must be seen as an investment—not as an expense.

Finally, Engineers Canada participates in consultations on legislation and regulations that impact the work of engineers and addresses activities that could involve engineering work. Engineers Canada will continue to build open working relationships with the federal government to ensure that engineers are directly involved with decision-making throughout the federal procurement process.

## Recommendation to the federal government

The federal government should ensure that engineering decisions are made by professional engineers as this will ensure public safety and welfare and promote innovation. The federal government should also:

- Actively collaborate with the engineering profession throughout all phases of the procurement process.
- Ensure that every engineering decision required on a Government of Canada procurement project is made by a professional engineer.

## How Engineers Canada will contribute

Engineers Canada will continue to:

- Participate in formal government consultations, national roundtables, and appear before the House of Commons and Senate standing committees to advance the inclusion of professional engineers as decision makers during the federal government's engineering-related procurement processes.
- Provide advice and proposed language on the federal government's engineering-related procurement processes to facilitate the development of legislation and federal regulatory frameworks that promote innovation and productivity within procurement projects.
- Continue to work with governments and engineering regulators to promote and educate the federal government and other levels of government on the importance of including engineers at all stages of the federal procurement process.