



34 King Street East,
9th Floor, Toronto
Ontario Canada
M5C 2X8

The Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada (PDAC) Position on the Professional Registration of Geoscientists in Canada

July 2005

PDAC position: A Canada-wide system of professional registration of geoscientists

The PDAC supports the professional registration of geoscientists in Canada. The PDAC is working with affected individuals, organizations and governments to improve the system of registration for geoscientists in Canada to allow for professional practice without consideration of provincial or territorial boundaries.

It is the PDAC's position that an internationally recognized, Canada-wide system of professional practice, would promote consistent standards of practice, high rates of compliance, cost effective administration, improved flexibility and, most importantly, enhanced protection of the public.

Example of a Canada-wide professional designation: PGeo (Canada)

Background on the issue:

In order to work as a professional geoscientist in a Canadian province or territory, an individual must first meet that jurisdiction's requirements for registration as established by provincial legislation and administered by a Self Regulatory Organization (SRO).

Why action is needed:

- As currently structured, the membership size, professional standards, financial resources and monitoring capacity of the SRO's vary widely among jurisdictions resulting in an inconsistent system that poses a risk to practitioners, regulators, and the general public.
- The nature of mineral exploration often requires that individuals with professional expertise be available to travel to any part of Canada on short notice. However, the complexity of the existing registration system serves as a time and cost impediment to the individual geoscientist and to the viability of the exploration sector in Canada.



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- Discussions with geoscientists across Canada have led to the conclusion that we currently do not have a satisfactory system for mobility of professional practice among provinces and territories, and that bureaucratic procedures and costs are keeping many geoscientists from joining the professional associations. This situation has ongoing implications for the financial viability and monitoring capacity of the SRO's and maintenance of standards.
- Geoscience is a global profession that, in Canada, is constrained by an inefficient regulatory framework. An improved system will ensure that Canadian geoscientists and the companies that employ them continue to be competitive internationally.
- Many other professions in Canada have managed to resolve these structural challenges by reducing and eliminating barriers to mobility in accordance with the objectives of the provincial and federal Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT).

Strategy:

The associations that represent geoscientists in Canada have a responsibility to the public and to the profession. By cooperating on the development of a model for a Canada-wide system of registration, we can ensure that the profession is regulated in a manner that better protects the public and meets the needs of geoscientists and government.

Given the provincial and territorial responsibility for licensing, there will be a need to review and modify the governing statutes and regulations to allow for mobility of geoscientists. The PDAC believes that the federal, provincial and territorial governments must work collaboratively to protect the public interest by facilitating the harmonization of the various statutes and regulations.

Objectives of a Canada-wide system of professional registration of geoscientists:

- Enhanced protection of the public
- Consistent standards of practice
- High rates of compliance
- Cost effective administration
- Improved flexibility for professionals
- National mobility for Canadian geoscientists
- International recognition of Canadian geoscientists