



ANNUAL REPORT 2015-2016

Forum of Labour Market Ministers

Forum of Labour Market Ministers (FLMM)

The FLMM is an intergovernmental forum established to strengthen cooperation and strategic thinking on the labour market priorities of the provinces, territories and Canada. The FLMM is composed of federal, provincial and territorial Ministers, Deputy Ministers and officials with labour market responsibilities.

Annual Report

April 2015 to March 2016

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| The Forum of Labour Market Ministers

The Forum of Labour Market Ministers (FLMM) is composed of federal, provincial and territorial Ministers responsible for labour market issues. It was created in 1983 to promote discussion and cooperation on common labour market matters.

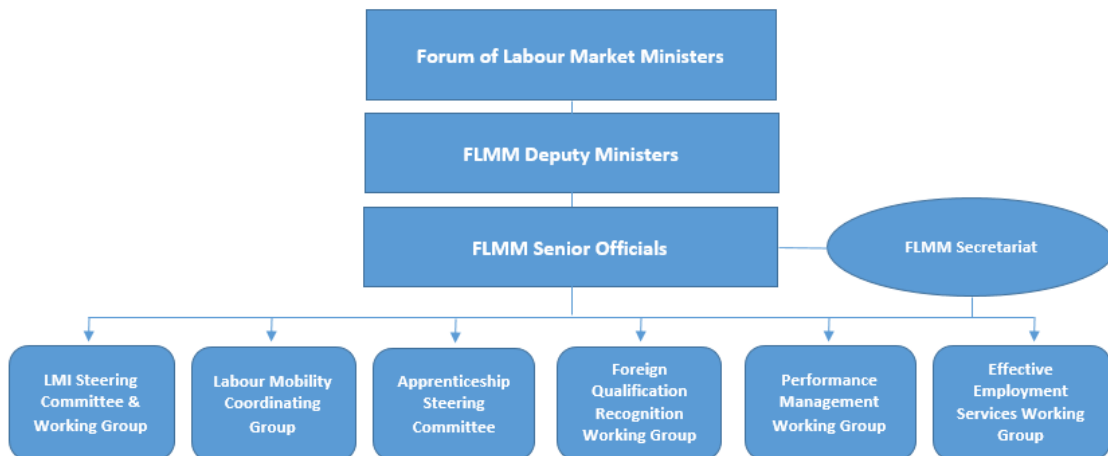
The FLMM is co-chaired by the federal government (represented by the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour) and a lead province or territory (currently the Government of Quebec, represented by the Minister of Employment and Social Solidarity). The provincial-territorial co-chair role has a two-year rotation, with Quebec’s mandate running from April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2017.

The FLMM represents all member governments and facilitates discussions and collaboration at the Minister, Deputy Minister and Senior Official levels.

The current priorities of the Forum include:

- ❖ Labour market information (LMI);
- ❖ Labour mobility between provinces and territories in Canada;
- ❖ Foreign qualifications recognition (FQR);
- ❖ Harmonizing apprenticeship training and strengthening employer participation in training; and,
- ❖ Intergovernmental labour market agreements, including the Canada Job Fund.

2015-2016 Forum of Labour Market Ministers Organization Chart



| 2015-2016 Year in Review

To address more effectively labour market needs and improve economic opportunities for all Canadians, the FLMM undertook a wide range of initiatives in 2015-2016 to improve skills development and the labour market.

During the FLMM meeting held on July 8, 2015 in Quebec City, Ministers agreed to take ambitious action to improve the labour market and promote the growth of the Canadian economy. These actions include:

- ❖ Creating a Labour Market Information Council (LMI);
- ❖ Accelerating harmonization of Red Seal apprenticeship training; and,
- ❖ Working with regulators to establish more ambitious timelines for foreign qualification recognition.



FLMM meeting in Québec City, July 8, 2015

The fiscal year 2015-2016 was marked by the completion of a business plan for the creation of a Pan-Canadian LMI Council. This Council, complemented by a National Stakeholder Advisory Panel, will ensure that labour market information is comprehensive, meets recognized standards, and reflects local labour market realities and needs.

A number of other initiatives were also implemented to increase employer participation in apprenticeship and to harmonize apprenticeship training in Red Seal trades. By September 2016, most provinces and territories will have completed the harmonization of apprenticeship training for ten Red Seal trades.¹² During the July 8, 2015 Ministerial meeting, federal, provincial and territorial (FPT) governments agreed to accelerate harmonization of 30 Red Seal trades by 2020 and created an ambitious objective of harmonizing training for two-thirds of Red Seal apprentices by 2017.

The Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications³ (the Framework) adopted in 2009 by FLMM Ministers, includes a one-year commitment to timely service. This commitment refers to the length of time it takes a regulatory authority to communicate the outcome of their initial assessment of foreign qualifications to an applicant, following the submission of a completed application. At the July 2015 meeting, while recognizing that workers typically receive a response more quickly, FLMM Ministers committed to working with regulators toward more ambitious timelines.

Ministers also agreed to speed up the labour market integration of newcomers through enhanced pre-decision information and pre-arrival credential assessment. Numerous actions were undertaken by FPT governments during the 2015-2016 fiscal year to meet these objectives.

Lastly, recognizing the importance of engaging employers in the training systems as a way to improve labour markets, Ministers confirmed their commitment to conduct a formal review of the Canada Job Grant (CJG) following the first year of implementation, with the exception of Quebec, which does not implement the CJG. A comprehensive report with recommendations to ensure that the CJG is meeting its objectives and responds effectively to local and regional labour market needs in Canada was made publicly available in early 2016. FPT governments are currently working together to determine whether changes to the program are required to meet its objectives.

¹ Considering the uniqueness of its apprenticeship system, Quebec is participating as an observer in apprenticeship harmonization efforts.

² In Ontario, consultations with industry partners on harmonization are led by the Ontario College of Trades. Ontario remains supportive of harmonization and endorses any effort that enhances the quality of apprenticeship and mobility of apprentices. However, it is unable to commit to implementation of specific harmonization elements or timelines.

³ While the Government of Quebec has not endorsed the Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications, it supports the principles and contributes to its work, acting within its exclusive jurisdiction with regards to immigrant integration under the Canada-Quebec Accord Relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens.

| Labour Market Information

At the November 2014 FLMM meeting, Ministers endorsed *A Framework for Labour Market Information for Canada* that commits governments to jointly set priorities and continue to improve how they work together on LMI. Ministers agreed to work together to improve the quality and availability of LMI, in particular for under-represented groups in the labour market. The Ministers also tasked their officials to develop clear recommendations for an approach to improve LMI in Canada that includes all labour market partners, both government and non-government.

To address Ministers' desire to implement a coordinated approach to improve LMI in Canada, FPT governments⁴ held consultations with representatives from the business, labour, education and training sectors, career and employment service providers, and municipalities. These consultations highlighted the importance of ensuring that LMI responds to the needs of all Canadians and aligns to recognized standards. Participants also described the urgent need for LMI that reflects local labour market conditions.

Recognizing that timely, reliable, comprehensive and easily accessible LMI is critical to determining and continuing to meet labour market needs, Ministers endorsed the creation of a new **LMI Council** with a complementary National Stakeholder Advisory at their July 2015 meeting. As part of their approval, Ministers tasked FPT governments to develop a business plan that will provide direction for the new Council. Through this Council, governments will work together with stakeholders to ensure that all Canadians, including students, employers, workers and educators, have access to the unbiased information they need to make informed decisions.

The Council will focus on developing and creating a new collaborative platform for disseminating LMI, addressing the need for more granular local LMI, and prioritizing consistency of LMI through alignment of definitions, standards and methodologies. As a coordinating body, the Council will maximize the value from existing LMI investments across Canada, and foster opportunities for collaboration among governments and with stakeholders.

⁴ Quebec held its own consultations with the Commission des partenaires du marché du travail (CPMT).

| Apprenticeship

In August 2014, recognizing the need to enhance apprenticeship training to address labour markets' demands, FPT governments agreed to establish an Apprenticeship Steering Committee with the mission of increasing employer participation in apprenticeship and harmonizing apprenticeship training in Red Seal trades.

Employer Engagement

Employers play a fundamental role in apprenticeship. At the July 2015 Ministerial meeting, Ministers agreed to collaborate to improve employer engagement in apprenticeship. Collaboration will focus on: improving the complementarity and coordination of programs; leveraging resources and experiences across governments; and sharing information and best practices.

Collaborative efforts are informing ways to address employer barriers to participating in apprenticeship and encouraging their engagement in order to create more opportunities for apprentices across Canada.

Harmonization

By supporting more consistent apprenticeship training across provinces and territories⁵⁶, the harmonization initiative will improve the mobility of apprentices, support an increase in their completion rates, and enable employers to access a larger pool of apprentices.

Thanks to the concerted efforts of the Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship, with support from the Apprenticeship Steering Committee, harmonization of ten Red Seal Trades will be implemented by September 2016 in most jurisdictions.

At the FLMM Minister's meeting held on July 8, 2015 in Quebec City, FPT governments agreed to accelerate harmonization of 30 Red Seal trades by 2020, and set the ambitious new target of harmonizing training for two-thirds of Red Seal apprentices by 2017.

⁵ Considering the uniqueness of its apprenticeship system, Quebec is participating as an observer in apprenticeship harmonization efforts.

⁶ In Ontario, consultations with industry partners on harmonization are led by the Ontario College of Trades. Ontario remains supportive of harmonization and endorses any effort that enhances the quality of apprenticeship and mobility of apprentices. However, it is unable to commit to implementation of specific harmonization elements or timelines.

Provincial-Territorial Initiatives on Apprenticeship Mobility

Provincial and territorial governments have also led apprenticeship mobility initiatives. On July 16, 2015, Canada's Premiers signed the *Provincial-Territorial Apprenticeship Mobility Protocol*, establishing a framework to facilitate apprenticeship mobility and enabling apprentices to pursue jobs anywhere in Canada, without interruption to their continuum of training.

Provincial and territorial Ministers responsible for apprenticeship and labour markets subsequently signed the *Provincial-Territorial Apprenticeship Mobility Agreement* that details jurisdictional commitments to facilitate, to the extent practicable, the mobility of apprentices across Canada. Under the agreement, apprentices who move from one province or territory to another can receive recognition for hours worked, training and related exams.

The *Provincial-Territorial Apprenticeship Mobility Guidelines* as well as a *Provincial-Territorial Apprenticeship Mobility Transfer Guide* are available online and offer information and guidance and include the mobility processes established within provinces and territories. As committed to by Premiers and Ministers, all jurisdictions established apprenticeship mobility measures, to the extent practicable by January 2016. Further work continues on pre-apprenticeship mobility and an executive group will be tasked with ensuring work completed remains current and addresses any remaining challenges.

| Labour Mobility

In signing the *Agreement on Internal Trade* (AIT) in 1994, FPT governments agreed to reduce and remove interprovincial barriers to the free movement of workers, goods, services and investments. Chapter 7 of the AIT, which was amended in 2009 for greater effectiveness, guarantees the mobility of certified workers in regulated trades and occupations in Canada. Under this Agreement, the FLMM, through the Labour Mobility Coordinating Group (LMCG), is responsible for coordinating implementation of the Labour Mobility Chapter. The LMCG is responsible for:

- Supporting regulatory authorities and giving them advice and information on their responsibilities;
- Providing consistency on how Labour Mobility provisions are interpreted and applied across provinces and territories;
- Assessing the effectiveness of Labour Mobility under the AIT across Canada;
- Developing ways to reduce barriers to Labour Mobility; and
- Providing information on Labour Mobility to interested individuals and stakeholders.

The LMCG supports the ongoing application of Chapter 7 by identifying mobility challenges with a view to providing a consistent interpretation of the Chapter's provisions to reduce mobility barriers. The LMCG therefore works on resolving differences in understanding and application of Chapter 7.

In 2015-2016, FPT governments, through the LMCG, worked towards implementing a communications plan in response to the Ministers' directive, in July 2014, to provide Canadians with more information about labour mobility opportunities. A revamped user-friendly website with transparent and accessible communication tools will be rolled out in 2016-2017 to provide certified workers, regulatory bodies and other interested stakeholders with mobility information.

The LMCG has also done work to clarify the kind of information that can be requested from labour mobility applicants. A *Best Practice Checklist for Certifying Labour Mobility Applicants* was created for regulators to provide guidance on aligning registration and certification practices with Chapter 7. To further support regulators' efforts to comply with Chapter 7, the LMCG regularly works with various national regulatory bodies. In 2015/16, the LMCG collaborated with the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association and the Canadian Council for Practical Nurse Regulators.

Lastly, pursuant to Article 709 of the AIT, the LMCG annually reviews the effectiveness of Chapter 7 provisions, including any unintended adverse consequences. This exercise contributes to the FLMM's strategic thinking and helps it better understand the difficulties and successes of Chapter 7 implementation.

| Foreign Qualification Recognition

Internationally-trained immigrants and other workers play a key role in maintaining economic prosperity and quality of life in Canada. However, many of these workers have difficulty obtaining official recognition of their qualifications, education and work experience. A number of barriers, ranging from a lack of pre-arrival information to labour market integration and attachment, hinder the recognition of these newcomers' professional qualifications.

To address these barriers and enhance foreign qualification recognition, FLMM Ministers adopted a *Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications* (the Framework) in November 2009. This Framework provides a shared vision, guiding principles, and desired outcomes for improving the assessment and recognition of foreign qualifications in regulated occupations in Canada.

Since the publication of the Framework, the Foreign Qualification Recognition Working Group (FQRWG) has undertaken specific initiatives to increase the fairness, transparency, timeliness and consistency of the foreign qualifications assessment and recognition processes across a pathway from pre-arrival to workforce participation.

The 2015-2016 work plan is based on the priorities identified in the renewed multilateral approach – *An Action Plan for Better Foreign Qualification Recognition* – to continue address FQR challenges. This approach, approved by the Ministers in November 2014, focuses on four priorities:

- Pre-decision Information and Pre-Arrival Assessment Processes;
- Workforce Participation;
- Monitoring and Evaluation⁷; and,
- Communicating Federal-Provincial/Territorial (F-P/T) Actions to Stakeholders

⁷ Considering its existing accountability mechanisms, the Quebec government does not participate in the pan-Canadian evaluation activities. Quebec rather agrees to share public reports already made available to its citizens, notably those tabled at the National Assembly.

During 2015-2016, efforts were made to improve the effectiveness of pre-arrival tools and support, including the accessibility of pre-decision information. Through the FQRWG, the FPT governments have also conducted research to identify FQR best practices in the provinces and territories as well as opportunities for collaboration.

Since the adoption of the Framework, the FQRWG has been developing action plans for target occupations to improve the timeliness and fairness of assessment processes and the recognition of qualifications required for licensure. Consultations with three of the five professions identified as part of the third set of target occupations (2014-2015) were completed during the reporting period and the development of action plans for the remaining two occupations (psychologists and lawyers) are underway. The Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship and the FQRWG share responsibility for work to improve FQR in the trades. In 2015-2016, the FQRWG also held several consultations with key stakeholders to renew the strategy for monitoring and evaluating FQR systems and to develop an improved monitoring strategy and instrument.

Third Set of Target Occupations:

Professions include:

Audiologists and Speech Therapists, Midwives, Psychologists, Lawyers, and Geo-scientists.

Trades include:

Carpenters/ Cabinetmakers, Electricians (industrial and construction), Welders and Technicians, and Heavy Equipment Operators.

At their July 2015 FLMM meeting, Ministers acknowledged achievements in providing responses for initial assessments of qualifications of internationally trained individuals within one year under the Framework's commitment to timely service. Recognizing that assessment responses are often provided more quickly, Ministers committed to working with regulators toward more ambitious timelines. To effectively respond to this commitment, the FQRWG distributed surveys to regulators, fairness commissioners and national associations to establish a baseline of information from which to assess FQR progress. Efforts to address the question of timeliness across the entire FQR pathway also included commissioned consultants to explore the update of pre-decision and pre-arrival information.

| Canada Job Grant Review

Employer participation in training systems is key to improving labour markets. The Canada Job Grant (CJG) aims notably to increase the participation of Canadians in the labour force, helping them develop the skills necessary to find and keep meaningful and long-term employment, and to increase employer investment in training to ensure that skills are better aligned to job opportunities. Therefore, provinces and territories, with the exception of Quebec, which does not implement the CJG, have developed programs to address local and regional labour market needs, within the overarching national CJG parameters.

In 2015-2016, the FLMM representatives delivered on the commitment made by Ministers to complete a review of the CJG in the second year of implementation. A Pan-Canadian report synthesizing the review findings as well as the main observations of each province and territory was made publicly available in early 2016.

This formal review assessed whether the CJG was meeting its objectives and if changes to the program parameters are necessary moving forward. CJG implementation discussions will continue in 2016-2017.

| Other Provincial-Territorial Initiatives

Provincial and territorial labour Ministers have collaboratively undertaken initiatives to respond to shared issues and challenges, notably by signing the above-mentioned *Provincial-Territorial Apprentice Mobility Agreement*.

Moreover, in December 2015, provincial and territorial education and labour market Ministers jointly released a document designed to better promote alignment between skills and education systems and the needs of the labour market. The *Toolkit of Promising Practices* represents the fulfillment of a provincial and territorial Ministerial commitment made at the Skills for the Future symposium, held in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, in July 2014. This Toolkit includes innovative programs and initiatives undertaken by the provinces and territories to learn from one another about how to address common challenges, such as maintaining a competitive workforce in a changing economic environment. The toolkit is available on the FLMM website.

| Financial Statements

Working Group	Approved Budget	Expenses	Variance
FPT Activities	\$1,319,387.00	\$993,873.82	\$325,513.18
PT Activities	\$81,000.00	\$59,469.33	\$21,430.67
Total	\$1,400,387.00	\$1,053,343.15	\$347,043.85