

INDUSTRY ADVISORY

CGC Issues Call for Participants to Develop National Occupational Standard *Initiative to define GeoExchange™ installer work processes*

Ottawa (Ontario) & Montréal (Québec) December 12, 2008 – The Canadian GeoExchange Coalition (CGC) today issued a call for expressions of interest from Canadian Installers, to help develop the continent's first National Occupational Standard for GeoExchange technology.

Working together with Canada's Electricity Sector Council (ESC), and with funding assistance from Natural Resources Canada, CGC will bring together eight to ten installers from Canada's various regions during the week of January 20th 2009, in Montreal, to draft a step-by-step document defining the tasks executed by a typical installer. CGC and ESC will then publish the draft Occupational Standard for industry and public comment online, before finalisation in late March 2009 and publication in Summer 2009.

Catherine Cottingham, CEO of the Electricity Sector Council and a Keynote Speaker at CGCs 2007 national conference in Calgary said "CGC's leadership, and its help in this Standards effort is a key step in professionalising the GeoExchange industry. Having a National Occupational Standard enables provincial governments to better define skills and training requirements, create new or re-training programs, or add the technology to jobs development programs. Having a Standard allows private employers to identify skills gaps in their staff, or training needs among interviewees, and enables Colleges to more accurately build curricula. This is a critical and little-understood step in helping define an industry's talent needs, and a focus of our work at the Electricity Sector Council."

CGC and ESC have been working together since 2006 to help integrate Canada's GeoExchange industry into the national occupational system, under the aegis of the federal Department of Human Resources and Skills Development, and with funding assistance from Natural Resources Canada. The partnership arises from work CGC began in 2006 to provide north American industry with up-to-date, Canada-relevant training, and additionally to develop a quality assurance program, all based on Standards. CGC training version 4.0, to be released in mid-2010, after a version 3.0 in 2009, will follow this nationally defined installation sequence and process arising from this project. "This project is a perfect complement to our market transformation initiative, as it consolidates our industry around a common understanding which standards can provide" stated Denis Tanguay, CGC President & CEO.

Travel and accommodation may be reimbursed through the project per standard federal guidelines. Participants are invited to submit their written expression of interest before midnight Pacific Standard Time on January 6th, 2009 to CGC via ted.kantrowitz@geo-exchange.ca .

The Canadian GeoExchange™ Coalition acts as the industry catalyst to unite private and public sector stakeholders, and to expand the market for geoexchange™ technology in Canada. As the nexus of information, training, certification, industry standards and public awareness, CGC works with stakeholders to build the necessary infrastructure to foster the growth of the Canadian geoexchange™ industry. For more information, visit www.geo-exchange.ca

Background

Occupational Standards Development for Renewables

National Occupational Standards allow private employers, colleges, unions, and federal and provincial governments to more easily understand and address occupational needs for an industry. These Standards provide the framework to develop training and occupational assessment programming to support workforce development for the industry.

The objective of the Renewables Occupational Standards Project of the Electricity Sector Council (ESC) is to coordinate the development of three national occupational standards for the following positions:

- Solar Thermal Equipment Installer
- Solar Photovoltaic Installer
- GeoExchange Installer

Thanks to funding made available through Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), the Electricity Sector Council has partnered with the Canadian Solar Industries Association and the Canadian GeoExchange Coalition to complete this project.

Based on documented feedback from industry stakeholders-- including the Canadian GeoExchange Coalition-- the current lack of occupational standards for this industry is poses human resource challenges that must be proactively addressed.

These include:

- The growth of the renewables sector has led to the development of some training without defined occupational standards;
- Training needs for these occupations is expected to grow and skills profiles and occupational standards can provide national consistency and standardized curriculum;
- Required competencies, in addition to trade skills, need to be defined;
- Overall qualifications required to execute the work need to be better understood.

Overall, the project will increase the capability of the renewable energy industry to recruit and develop qualified new entrants and transition workers. Additionally, the project will increase the ability of colleges and universities to develop appropriate curriculum and deliver on growing training needs for the industry.

To this end, ESC, in conjunction with the Canadian GeoExchange Coalition, is coordinating consultation sessions with people currently engaged in the respective job functions. ESC's development consultants will work with participants through a draft document detailing the skills and competencies required for the position, and solicit feedback and input to make sure this document reflects what people are actually doing on the job.

The Electricity Sector Council (ESC) takes a leadership role in fostering commitment to skills development and business excellence/operating efficiencies in the energy industry throughout Canada. The mission of the Electricity Sector Council is to develop sector based initiatives which strengthen the ability of stakeholders in the Canadian electricity industry to meet current and future needs for a skilled, safety-focused, and internationally competitive work force.

For more information on the Electricity Sector Council, please contact:

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