

Request for Quotation (RFQ)

Invitation to interested parties to draft a progress report on the implementation in Canada of conventions related to qualification recognition

THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF EDUCATION, CANADA (CMEC) is an intergovernmental body providing leadership in policy development, program administration, and research at the pan-Canadian and international levels.

At this time, the Corporation of CMEC (CCMEC) requires the services of a selected interested party (the Proponent) to draft a progress report on the implementation in Canada of conventions related to qualification recognition.

Project background

Ratification by Canada of conventions related to qualification recognition

Upon the agreement of all the provinces and territories, Canada ratified two UNESCO conventions related to qualification recognition for the Europe region:

- in 1990, the 1979 UNESCO Convention;¹
- in 2018, the 1997 Lisbon Convention.²

Preparatory steps are well underway for a possible ratification by Canada of the 2019 Global Convention.³

These conventions are designed to facilitate international academic mobility, and to promote the right of individuals to have their higher education qualifications assessed through a fair, transparent, and non-discriminatory process. They aim to expand access to higher education and strengthen research cooperation by facilitating international exchanges of students, teachers, researchers, and job-seekers.

¹ UNESCO, *Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees concerning Higher Education in the States belonging to the Europe Region* (1979), retrieved from: <https://www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/convention-recognition-studies-diplomas-and-degrees-concerning-higher-education-states-belonging>.

² UNESCO and Council of Europe, *Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region* (1997), retrieved from: <https://www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/convention-recognition-qualifications-concerning-higher-education-european-region?hub=66535>.

³ UNESCO, *Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education* (2019), retrieved from: <https://www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/global-convention-recognition-qualifications-concerning-higher-education>.

Monitoring exercises: international process with UNESCO Member States

Following the entry into force of UNESCO international conventions, a cyclical monitoring exercise of the implementation of conventions by States Parties begins as part of the normal procedure; cyclical monitoring is typically carried out on a three- to five-year cycle, and at the request of UNESCO. It is used as a tool to inform and improve the ongoing progress of the implementation of a convention. This practice is in line with a quality assurance process wherein gradual improvements are introduced over time.

The resulting monitoring report published by UNESCO summarizes key findings across all State Parties. The report identifies several recommendations for State Parties, competent recognition authorities, and assessment services. As a result, these recommendations may guide the respective multiyear work plans of State Parties with responsibilities to implement provisions within their respective countries. The report also identifies convention provisions where challenges exist across most State Parties, which in turn, may present an opportunity for additional collective focus in the future. As a result, this collective focus may guide a multiyear work plan of the convention governance mechanism, through which the development of new subsidiary texts, recommendations, best practices are collectively undertaken, in support of implementation.

Within the framework of the 1997 Lisbon Convention, UNESCO published the *Monitoring the Implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention – Final Report*⁴ in 2016, and in 2022, the *Monitoring the implementation of the Lisbon recognition Convention: monitoring report*⁵ was also published.

With respect to the 2019 Global Convention, no monitoring exercises have been initiated thus far.

Monitoring exercises: domestic process in Canada

In Canada, the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC) has provided support with procedures for the adoption and monitoring of conventions related to qualification recognition.⁶

In 2018, CICIC led consultations with assessment services and competent recognition bodies in Canada on the draft 2019 Global Convention. Using data collected, CamProf Inc. subsequently provided a comprehensive data analysis on Canada's implementation of all provisions of the 1997 Lisbon Recognition Convention undertaken by assessment services and competent

⁴ UNESCO, *Monitoring the Implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention – Final Report* (2016), retrieved from: http://www.enic-naric.net/fileusers/Monitoring_Implementation_LRC-Final_Report.pdf.

⁵ UNESCO, *Monitoring the implementation of the Lisbon recognition Convention: monitoring report* (2022), retrieved from: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000383465>.

⁶ CICIC, *The Lisbon Recognition Convention*, "Monitoring the implementation in Canada," retrieved from https://www.cicic.ca/1640/monitoring_the_implementation_in_canada.canada.

recognition bodies in Canada. Additionally, the analysis looked at Canada’s readiness to implement provisions of the 2019 Global Convention. It is also important to consider that these assessment services and competent recognition bodies maintain broad autonomy in recognizing academic credentials in accordance with their respective legislated autonomy.

Most recently, in 2020 the independent report authored by CamProf Inc. and titled *Substantial Agreement – Academic Credential Assessment in Canada: Implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and Preparation for the UNESCO Global Convention*⁷ was published. Although this report does not necessarily reflect the official policies, positions, or views of CICIC, CMEC, provincial and territorial governments in Canada, or assessment services and competent recognition bodies in Canada, it does provide useful insight into the implementation of conventions related to qualification recognition in Canada. The same information informed Canada’s response to the 1997 Lisbon Convention monitoring exercise the same year.

Preparation for the next monitoring exercises

In summer 2026, it is expected that UNESCO will officially request and collect information from all State Parties to monitor the implementation of the 2019 Global Convention and 1997 Lisbon Convention through a joint consultation process. In turn, it is expected that UNESCO will publish a monitoring report in spring 2027.

Consequently, CICIC is preparing for this next monitoring exercise and thus requires the services of a selected Proponent to draft a progress report on the implementation in Canada of conventions related to qualification recognition.

The resulting progress report on the implementation in Canada of conventions related to qualification recognition would be used to prepare for and inform Canada’s official response to the UNESCO request in summer 2026, with relevant, credible, and evidence-based information from Canada to support key arguments and findings.

Scope of services (Services) to be provided to CMEC

The complete list of Services to be provided from August 2025 to March 2026 is outlined in the table below. The table includes a breakdown of estimated timelines and the number of days per tasks/phases that may be required to accomplish the Services.

#	Tasks/phases	Estimated timeline	Estimated days required
1	Project management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a work plan to meet expected deliverables. 	Duration of the	4–5

⁷ CamProf Inc. *Substantial Agreement – Academic Credential Assessment in Canada: Implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and Preparation for the UNESCO Global Convention* (2020), retrieved from https://www.cicic.ca/docs/2020/CamProf_report_Substantial_Agreement.pdf.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect existing data from CICIC. • Meet regularly with CICIC staff throughout the tasks to validate the work. • Provide a list of suggestions to CICIC staff at the conclusion of this work to inform future monitoring exercises in Canada. This list should identify areas in the report that would likely be subject to change in the future. 	contractual agreement	
2	Field research and literature review: International <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and analyze the legal text of the 2019 Global Convention and the 1997 Lisbon Convention, including subsidiary texts, and current governance work plan. • Read and analyze the following reports: <i>Monitoring the Implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention – Final Report</i> (2016) and <i>Monitoring the implementation of the Lisbon recognition Convention: monitoring report</i> (2022). • Collect existing information collated by CICIC staff between 2020 and today. • Using collated information, analyze relevant key tools, initiatives, resources, publications, and regulatory frameworks within the academic credential assessment and recognition sector outside Canada, which may inform pan-Canadian best practices. 	August to September 2025	2–3
3	Field research and literature review: Domestic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and analyze the independent report authored by CamProf Inc. and titled <i>Substantial Agreement – Academic Credential Assessment in Canada: Implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and Preparation for the UNESCO Global Convention</i> (2020). • Collect existing information collated by CICIC staff between 2020 and today. • Using this collated information, review and analyze adherence to the conventions’ principles by provincial, territorial, and federal governments (i.e., competent authorities) through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ regulatory frameworks, policies, activities, or publications related to academic credential assessment and recognition. 	August to September 2025	8–10

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using this collated information, review and analyze adherence to the conventions' principles by competent recognition authorities (i.e., professional regulatory bodies, postsecondary educational institutions), assessment services, and other allied organizations through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> governance, policies, activities, or publications related to academic credential assessment and recognition. Identify information gaps, including perspectives across competent authorities, recognition authorities, and assessment services. Ensure inclusivity by including groups from both official languages. Use alternative strategies to collect missing information and analyze it. 		
4	Peer-review: Phase 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist with identifying key members of the pan-Canadian academic credential assessment community and other interested parties who possess specific subject-matter expertise related to information gaps. This step will be facilitated by CICIC staff. Develop a short interview-style questionnaire. The questionnaire will be used in discussion with select key members of the community and other interested parties, to assist with collecting additional evidence-based information and fill any remaining information gaps. Carry out interviews with identified key members of the community and other interested parties (in English and in French). This step will also be facilitated by CICIC staff. 	September to October 2025	4–5
5	Draft the progress report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Propose an initial draft progress report on the implementation in Canada of conventions related to qualification recognition, aligned with the aforementioned research. The draft progress report may be prepared in either English or French. 	By November 7, 2025	10–15
6	Translation and copyediting	Mid-November to	2

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support CMEC's translation and copyediting team, answering questions and providing clarifications during the English and French review of the initial draft progress report on the implementation in Canada of conventions related to qualification recognition. This step will be facilitated by CICIC staff. 	December 2025 <i>(Requires a minimum of 4 to 6 weeks)</i>	
7	Peer-review: Phase 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek feedback from the key members of the pan-Canadian academic credential assessment community and other interested parties on the initial draft progress report on the implementation in Canada of conventions related to qualification recognition. This step will be facilitated by CICIC staff. 	Late December 2025 to late January 2026 <i>(Requires a minimum of 4 weeks)</i>	1
8	Revise the draft progress report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collate, address, and incorporate feedback from the peer-review process, as necessary and applicable. Propose a revised draft progress report on the implementation in Canada of conventions related to qualification recognition, based on the feedback received. 	By February 9, 2026	3–4
9	Translation and copyediting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support CMEC's translation and copyediting team, answering questions and providing clarifications during the English and French review of the revised draft progress report on the implementation in Canada of conventions related to qualification recognition. This step will be facilitated by CICIC staff. 	Mid-February to March 2026 <i>(Requires a minimum of 4 to 6 weeks)</i>	1
10	Final deliverables <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final progress report on the implementation in Canada of conventions related to qualification recognition List of suggestions for CICIC staff, to inform future monitoring exercises in Canada 	By March 23, 2026	1

Deliverables

The complete list of Deliverables to be provided is as follows:

- A. **Initial** (first version) draft progress report on the implementation in Canada of conventions related to qualification recognition. The initial draft progress report may be submitted in English or in French and will be used for the peer-review process.
- B. **Revised** (second version) draft progress report on the implementation in Canada of conventions related to qualification recognition. The revised draft progress report may be submitted in English or in French and will be the version intended for publication, pending copyediting and translation.
- C. **Final** (third version) progress report on the implementation in Canada of conventions related to qualification recognition. This completed version will be submitted for publication.
- D. **List of suggestions for CICIC staff**, to inform future monitoring exercises in Canada. This list should identify areas in the report that would likely be subject to change in the future.

Considerations

At all stages of producing the deliverables, the selected Proponent should demonstrate an understanding and acknowledgment of provincial and territorial autonomy, in particular with respect to their individual responsibilities in education, and specifically in the implementation of international legal instruments related to academic credential recognition in Canada. Relatedly, the selected Proponent should demonstrate similar consideration for the due level of autonomy and authority for the following groups: postsecondary educational institutions (e.g., in admission procedures), professional regulatory bodies (e.g., for professional certification), and members of the Alliance of Credential Evaluation Services of Canada (ACESC) (e.g., for nonbinding expert advice on academic credential assessment).

The final progress report on the implementation in Canada of conventions related to qualification recognition should focus mainly on recent developments between 2020 and today on Canada's adherence to the conventions' principles. There is no need to repeat what was already laid out in the *Substantial Agreement – Academic Credential Assessment in Canada: Implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and Preparation for the UNESCO Global Convention* (2020) report, unless necessary for context. References to the 2020 report, however, are strongly recommended, where needed. By comparison, this progress report will be more concise and shorter.

The progress report should be structured similarly to the *Substantial Agreement – Academic Credential Assessment in Canada: Implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and Preparation for the UNESCO Global Convention* (2020), to facilitate comparability and cross-referencing. It should contain the following sections:

- Executive Summary
- Introduction
- Access to Assessment
- Criteria and Procedures
- Time Limit
- Right to Appeal
- Substantial Differences
- Qualifications Held by Refugees
- Information on Education Systems and Higher Education Institutions
- National Information Centre
- 1997 Lisbon Convention: Subsidiary Texts and Recommendations
- 2019 Global Convention: Subsidiary Texts and Recommendations
- Digitization of Academic Credentials

Additional sections that focus on specific topics, given recent developments in the sector, should also appear in the report. These topics include:

- quality assurance, including crossborder or transnational education (TNE)
- validation of partial studies and prior learning (including microcredentials and nontraditional qualifications)
- alternative assessment and recognition pathways (aside from their use by applicants without access to verifiable documentation, such as refugees and those in refugee-like situations)
- measures to combat fraudulent activities in the assessment procedure and transmission of learners' data
- artificial intelligence (AI) and the digitization of the assessment procedure and transmission of data (such as the adoption and reliance on official trusted data or document exchange providers, digitized documents, and officially sanctioned universal wallets)
- availability of training and professional development opportunities for academic credential assessors in or outside Canada
- international collaboration with networks of implementation structures, such as: the European Network of Information Centres and the National Academic Recognition Information Centres (ENIC-NARIC Networks); the Asia-Pacific Network of National Information Centres (APNNIC); the Network of National Information Centers for Latin America and the Caribbean (CINALC); the African Network of National Implementation Structures
- the elimination of barriers to the free movement of persons (labour mobility) across Canada
- automatic recognition

The content of each section should be laid out/communicated according to the following guidelines:

- Cite specific provisions of the 1997 Lisbon Convention and the 2019 Global Convention.
- Provide context relevant to Canada on the interpretation of these specific provisions (if needed).
- Explicitly demonstrate adherence (or not) to the conventions' principles, noting any recent developments since 2020 from:
 - the professional regulated occupations sector (i.e., a professional regulatory body and/or an organization supporting professional certification functions).
 - the postsecondary education sector (i.e., a postsecondary educational institution and/or an organization supporting admission functions, prior learning assessment, and/or transfer credit).
 - assessment services (i.e., members ACESC).
 - any other relevant information by competent authorities in Canada (i.e., provincial, territorial, federal governments), such as the introduction of new legislation, frameworks, policies, or activities.

The conclusion should identify key findings for specific provisions and their implementation in Canada.

Overall, the report should include relevant, credible, and evidence-based information to support key arguments and findings on Canada's adherence (or not) to the conventions' principles. Such information includes referencing data, research studies, expert analysis, policy documents, legal frameworks, or other documentation from authoritative sources. All sources should be clearly cited, and, where possible, preference should be given to recent and peer-reviewed material. The objective is to ensure that the report's conclusions are grounded in factual, verifiable evidence rather than opinion or anecdotal input from subject-matter experts. If the selected Proponent uses artificial intelligence (AI) tools to assist with the completion of certain tasks, measures need to be implemented to crosscheck all information to ensure it is based on real evidence that can be sourced and verified and is not false, invented, or misleading.

CICIC staff have already collated extensive relevant, credible, and evidence-based information between 2020 and today to support the Proponent in formulating key arguments and findings on Canada's adherence (or not) to the conventions' principles. This information will be available to the Proponent to facilitate the initial research and literature review process, both internationally and domestically. The availability of this information should enable the Proponent to limit the time allocated for the initial research and focus on the review and analysis, as well as identifying remaining information gaps, and alternative strategies to secure missing information. CICIC's collated information includes:

- provincial, territorial, and federal regulatory frameworks, policies, or activities related to academic credential assessment and recognition in Canada;

- publications by competent recognition authorities, assessment services, or other allied organizations in Canada, related to academic credential assessment and recognition in Canada; and
- frameworks, policies, or activities arising from international and regional networks and allied organizations involved with assessment and recognition procedures outside Canada.

Additional notes

Outside the scope of Services, it is understood that CICIC will be responsible for some important steps and expenditures.

CICIC will handle the professional translation and copyediting of the draft progress report on the implementation in Canada of conventions related to qualification recognition content. Additionally, CICIC will be responsible for the layout and graphic design of the report, at the end of the process.

As noted above, CICIC will facilitate the peer-review processes (in English and in French) with key members of the pan-Canadian academic credential assessment community and allied organizations.

Finally, CICIC will be responsible for all aspects of publication and dissemination through CICIC's networks of the final progress report on the implementation in Canada of conventions related to qualification recognition.

Costs, hours, and timeline

The Proponent:

- must be available from August 2025 to March 2026;
- is expected to provide the daily (or hourly) rate, a breakdown of costs per tasks/phases, along with an estimate of time that may be required to accomplish the Services from August 2025 to March 2026; and
- should bear in mind that CCMEC is a not-for-profit organization with a limited budget.

The maximum cost for the delivery of the Services is \$47,000 CAD (excluding taxes).

Selection criteria

The Proponent must meet the following criteria:

- project-management and organizational skills, and the ability to complete projects on time and on budget
- superior communication and writing skills (bilingual preferred)

- superior skills in research and analysis
- general knowledge of policies and procedures in the field of assessment and recognition of academic credentials in and outside Canada

Preference will be given to those who can demonstrate practical and relevant work experience in one or more of the following areas/organizations: an assessment service; a professional regulatory body and/or an organization supporting professional certification functions; a postsecondary educational institution and/or an organization supporting admission functions, prior learning assessment, and/or transfer credits; an immigrant-serving agency or community organization; a provincial or territorial government.

Costs, qualifications, and experience are some of the variables, among others, that will be used to evaluate submissions received from Proponents. CCMEC, the legal arm of CMEC, is not obliged to accept the lowest-priced submission, nor any submission at all.

Submission of a quotation by Proponents

Proponents are invited to submit a quotation, which should include the following information:

1. a summary of the relevant expertise, qualifications, and experience by outlining in point form how they meet the criteria;
2. the daily (or hourly) rate;
3. a breakdown of costs per tasks/phases; and
4. the estimated time required to accomplish the Services from August 2025 to March 2026.

Submissions will be reviewed by a selection committee in early August 2025, and the successful Proponent will be selected by mid-August 2025.

Submission deadline and contact information

Please send your quotation to CMEC, to the attention of Michael Ringuette, Coordinator, Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC), at m.ringuette@cmecc.ca, by July 27, 2025, 4:00 p.m. EDT. For more information, visit us at www.cmecc.ca and www.cicic.ca.

CMEC thanks all individuals and firms for their interest in this RFQ. Only those who are selected for an interview will be contacted.