SAFETY HARMONIZATION PROPOSAL



Submitted by:
Canada's Building Trades Unions

Prepared in partnership with:
My Workforce Solutions Consulting

CBTU SMCC

My Workforce SOLUTIONS & CONSULTING INC.

www.buildingtrades.ca

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Rob Wright
Deputy Minister of Labour, Associate Deputy Minister
Employment and Social Development Canada
140 Promenade du Portage, Phase IV
Gatineau, Québec K1A 0J9

Dear Rob,

On behalf of CBTU and our affiliates, I am pleased to submit this proposal to address Canada's need for harmonized safety worker training in Canada.

Canada is committed to ambitious infrastructure projects and building "One Canadian Economy," yet our skilled workforce faces significant mobility barriers due to duplicative safety training certification requirements across provincial-territorial boundaries. Despite having substantively similar content, safety certifications are not recognized between jurisdictions, forcing experienced workers to repeatedly complete training, increasing project costs, and creating delays.

CBTU proposes leveraging the proven success of the Red Seal Program Model to create a Pan-Canadian Safety Certification Mobility System. Just as Red Seal certifications enable labour mobility while respecting provincial-territorial diversity in training delivery, a similar approach can be applied to occupational safety training using a phased and consultative approach.

We believe this represents the most significant opportunity to reduce barriers, lower costs, and enhance safety outcomes while respecting provincial-territorial jurisdiction over training delivery. CBTU's approach of a collaborative federal-provincial-territorial action can achieve meaningful results for workers and employers across Canada.

Thank you for considering this proposal, and we look forward to continued discussions.

Regards,
Sean Strickland

Sean W. Strickland
Executive Director, CBTU

CBTU
CANADA'S BUILDING TRADES UNIONS

PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

CBTU proposes a phased Red Seal Style Pan-Canadian
Safety Training Standard; developed and tested alongside a project oversight committee and subject matter experts modelled on Red Seal principles, with defined learning outcomes and common assessments for specific safety areas.



This phased approach offers the best balance of feasibility, safety assurance, reduced duplication and long-term labour mobility, delivering early wins while building toward a durable pan-Canadian system.

There is broad agreement that any harmonization effort should begin with a limited number of high-impact safety certifications, and we have recommended seven priority areas for initial focus.

A provincially phased approach allows for testing and adjustment while allowing scalability and adoption across the country.

ABOUT CBTU

Canada's Building Trades Unions (CBTU) is the national voice for more than 600,000 Canadian skilled trades construction workers — members of 14 international unions, working in more than 60 different trades and occupations, generating 6% of Canada's GDP.

Each year, more than $300 Million in private sector money is invested annually in our 197 world-class union training centres across Canada.

PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

Why worker safety training harmonization has emerged as a priority

- Increased interprovincial labour mobility demands
- Major infrastructure and nation-building projects
- Persistent duplication of substantively similar safety training across jurisdictions
- Relationship to broader labour mobility and “one Canadian economy” objectives



ISSUE OVERVIEW

The mobility issue

Canada’s occupational health and safety (OHS) framework is decentralized, with provinces and territories responsible for legislating and enforcing safety training requirements.

Over time, this has resulted in:

- Multiple mandatory safety certifications with limited
- interjurisdictional recognition
- Repetition of substantively similar training when workers cross provincial-territorial boundaries
- Delays, costs, and inefficiencies for workers, employers, and project owners

These impacts are most acute in high-risk, project-based, and mobile sectors, including construction, industrial maintenance, energy, and major infrastructure projects.

WHY THIS MATTERS NOW

Several converging pressures have elevated safety training harmonization as a policy issue:

- Labour shortages and uneven regional labour supply
- Increased reliance on interprovincial mobility to deliver major projects



- Broader government commitments to reducing internal trade and labour mobility barriers
- Rising concern about the cumulative cost burden of duplicative train

CURRENT STATE: HOW SAFETY TRAINING IS GOVERNED TODAY

Key Characteristics:

- Safety training requirements are set through provincial territorial OHS acts and regulations
- Training delivery is often delegated to safety associations, private trainers, unions, or employers
- Proof of compliance is typically course-based, rather than outcome- or competency-based
- Mutual recognition across jurisdictions is limited and inconsistent

Implications:

- Workers may hold multiple versions of essentially the same certification
- Employers face uncertainty when deploying workers across jurisdictions
- Governments and regulators must manage fragmented oversight
- The system incentivizes duplication rather than equivalency

Policy Objective

The core policy question is how can Canada reduce unnecessary duplication in worker safety training while preserving or enhancing safety outcomes and respecting provincial–territorial jurisdiction?



ANY VIABLE APPROACH MUST BALANCE:

- Worker safety and public confidence
- Labour mobility and economic efficiency
- Jurisdictional autonomy
- Administrative feasibility

THE RED SEAL MODEL AS A REFERENCE POINT

What Red Seal Demonstrates

The Red Seal Program illustrates that Canada can successfully:

- Establish pan-Canadian standards based on learning outcomes
- Allow jurisdictions to retain control over training delivery
- Use common assessments to validate equivalency
- Enable national recognition without uniform curricula

Relevance to Safety Training

While Red Seal applies to skilled trades certification, its design principles, not its exact mechanics, offer a potential template for safety training harmonization.

Key transferable principles include:

- Outcome-based national standards
- SME-led development
- Common assessment and certification recognition
- Respect for jurisdictional diversity

PROPOSED SOLUTION

The Red Seal–Style Pan-Canadian Safety Training Standards (Phased) is the proposed path forward.

Develop a **Pan-Canadian Occupational Safety Training Standard** (OSTS) modelled on Red Seal principles, with defined learning outcomes and common assessments for specific safety areas. This phased approach offers the best balance of feasibility, safety assurance, and long-term labour mobility, delivering early wins while building toward a durable pan-Canadian system.

The proposed solution was determined using a comprehensive assessment of options was undertaken examining **6 key elements** for consideration.

- **Does the proposed solution reduce duplication**
- **Does the proposed solution support mobility**
- **Does the proposed solution provide safety assurance**
- **Does the proposed solution provide jurisdiction autonomy**
- **Does the proposed solution lend to complex implementation**
- **Does the proposed solution provide scalability**

Core Features

- Nationally defined competencies (not curricula)
- Jurisdiction-specific training delivery
- Pan-Canadian assessments validating equivalency
- Portable, nationally recognized safety credentials

Advantages

- Clear, transparent basis for recognition
- Reduces duplication while maintaining safety standards
- Scalable and adaptable across sectors
- Aligns with existing pan-Canadian labour mobility frameworks

Limitations

- Requires sustained intergovernmental collaboration
- More complex governance and implementation
- May require regulatory amendments in some jurisdictions

Implementation Implications

- Phased rollout starting with high-impact certifications
- SME-led standards development
- New assessment and credential-tracking mechanisms

Priority Areas for Initial Focus

There is broad agreement that any harmonization effort should begin with a limited number of high-impact safety certifications, such as:

- Core occupational health and safety training (entry level and work site protocols)
- Supervisor
- Mobile Elevated Work Platforms
- Confined space entry
- Fall protection / working at heights
- Hoisting and Rigging
- Trenching and Shoring

A phased approach allows for testing, learning, and adjustment

GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE

Organizational Project Structure

As the responsibility for decision making lies with both levels of government, there is significant input required from industry partners:

- Federal government: convening, coordination, and alignment with national labour mobility objectives
- Provincial–territorial governments: regulatory authority, endorsement, and enforcement
- Labour and employer partners: subject matter expertise, standards validation, training delivery
- Standards and training bodies: assessment development and quality assurance A multilateral forum (e.g., existing FPT labour market tables) would be essential for coordination.

Budget Projection

The proposed budget projection is separated by those elements that require funding and those that would be in-kind to the project. It is proposed that those who participate in the development workshops and subsequent work do so as an in-kind contribution to the project. A proposed budget projection is outlined in Appendix A.

APPENDIX A Budget | Funding Request Projection

33 Month project	**Year 1 July 2026 – March2027**	**Year 2 April 2027 – March 2028**	**Year 3 April 2028– March2029**	**Total Proposed Budget**
Salaries				
National Coordinator	112,500	154,500	159,135	426,135
Policy Analyst	75,000	103,000	106,090	284,090
Change Management	75,000	103,000	106,090	284,090
Admin/Doc Support	67,500	92,700	95,481	255,681
Sub-total	*330,000*	*453,200*	*466,796*	*1,249,996*
MERCS & Benefits (20%)	66,000	90,640	93,360	250,000
Total Salaries	**396,000**	**543,840**	**560,156**	**1,499,996**
Expenses				
IT Equipment	15,000	0	0	15,000
Travel Staff	18,750	30,000	30,000	78,750
Travel Dev. Committees	84,000	112,000	112,000	308,000
Host committee meetings	40,000	60,000	60,000	160,000
Professional Fees	37,500	50,000	37,500	125,000
Sut-total	*195,250*	*252,000*	*239,500*	*686,750*
CBTU Administration (15%)	29,287	37,800	35,925	103,012
Total Expenses	**224,537**	**289,800**	**275,425**	**789,762**
TOTAL FUNDING PROJECTION	**620,537**	**833,640**	**835,581**	**2,289,758**

APPENDIX A Budget |Funding Request Projection

In Kind Projection

33 Month project	Year 1 July 2026 – March 2027	Year 2 April 2027 – March 2028	Year 3 April 2028 – March 2029	Total Proposed In-KindBudget
Oversight Committee	72,000	192,000	96,000	360,000
Dev. Committees	420,000	560,000	560,000	1,540,000
Printing	10,000	10,000	10,000	30,000
Translation	20,000	30,000	30,000	80,000
Technical & Corporate Support	75,000	100,000	100,000	275,000
TOTAL IN-KIND PROJECTION	**597,000**	**892,000**	**796,000**	**2,285,000**

APPENDIX B Project Deliverable Schedule

Ongoing

- Review project deliverables and make necessary amendments to work plans
- Share project progress through quarterly progress reports
- Annual results measurement indicators report
- Continue rollout of completed programs

Year 1 July 2026 – March 2027

Months 1-3

- Oversight Committee Onboarding and terms of reference
- Recruit project team
- Conduct key activity scoping exercise with oversight committee
- Create work plans for key activities
- Sign agreement with any partner organizations

Months 4-9

- Develop communication collateral
- Consult with stakeholders (includes presentation and trade show participation)
    - Employers, unions, training providers, industry associations, government agencies
- Establish terms of reference for development committees (subject matter experts, SME)
- Establish development committees (SME) for the first two identified element for harmonization
- Develop standards of first two elements identified for harmonization
- Develop common policies related to cross-jurisdictional recognition
- Beta testing
- Implement standards of first two elements identified for harmonization
- Quarterly reporting

Year 2 April 2027 – March 2028

Months 1-12

- Develop communication materials
- Consult with stakeholders (includes presentation and trade show participation)
- Employers, unions, training providers, industry associations, government agencies
- Develop standards of for next three elements identified for harmonization
- Develop common policies related to cross-jurisdictional recognition
- Beta testing
- Implement standards of next three elements identified for harmonization
- Sustainability planning for future development and revisions
- Quarterly reporting

APPENDIX B Project Deliverable Schedule

Year 3 April 2028 – March 2029
Months 1-12

- Consult with stakeholders (includes presentation and trade show participation)
- Employers, unions, training providers, industry associations, government agencies
- Develop standards for last two elements identified for harmonization
- Develop common policies related to cross-jurisdictional recognition
- Beta testing
- Implement standards of last two elements identified for harmonization
- Review and revise programming as required
- Implement sustainability plan
- Quarterly reporting
- Final report

APPENDIX C Governance

Project Oversight Committee composition (in-kind)

- 2-3 Deputy Ministers
- 2-3 CEO's of Worksafe (or like organizations)
- 1 CSA
- 2-3 Industry Representatives Project Sponsor (in-kind)
- Canada's Building Trades Unions
- Responsible for financial reporting and project management as the sponsor organization
- Development Committees (Subject Matter Experts) (in-kind)

Staff (funded)

- National Regional Coordinator
- Senior Policy Analyst
- Change Management (working with stakeholders and PT's on implementation)
- Research and Statistics Officer
- Administrative Support/Document Control