



MEMO

March 7, 2025

TO: PIBC Board of Directors and Policy & Public Affairs Committee (Board meeting date: March 7, 2025)

FROM: Deborah Jensen RPP, MCIP (Chair of RPP Regulation Subcommittee)

RE: Professional Governance Research and Engagement Project – Q1 2025 Chair Update

PURPOSE

This memo presents the first quarterly update on the Professional Governance Research and Engagement Project (the Project).

BACKGROUND

In December 2023, the PIBC Board approved direction to undertake outreach and education about the *Professional Governance Act* and possible opportunities and implications for PIBC and the planning profession. The PIBC Board has not made any decisions on whether the planning profession should or should not be regulated under the *Professional Governance Act*. In 2024, the Policy & Public Affairs Committee assigned the RPP Regulation Subcommittee to provide guidance for the work of engaging the membership about professional governance and the *Professional Governance Act*.

On August 1, 2024, the Subcommittee convened an all-committee session to receive a presentation from PIBC's external legal counsel about the PGA. Subsequently, the RPP Regulation Subcommittee convened to create a work plan to formally engage the membership and to undertake complementary research. Through intense discussions about the need to collect as much information as possible and to make the information available to PIBC members, the Subcommittee crafted an integrated research and engagement work plan. At its meeting on November 13, 2024, the Subcommittee endorsed and advanced the Phase 1 Work Plan to the Board for consideration.

On November 29, 2024, the PIBC Board endorsed the Phase 1 Work Plan and directed the Chair of the RPP Regulation Subcommittee to provide quarterly updates to the Policy & Public Affairs Committee and Board. The Board also directed staff to distribute these quarterly reports for information to all PIBC standing and operational committees, PPAC Housing Task Force, JEDDI working group, and Chapter Chairs, and to post on the project webpage.

WORK PLAN UPDATES

Professional governance is a complex topic with potentially significant implications for the planning profession and the Institute. From the outset, the RPP Regulation Subcommittee has been intentional in designing a work plan that would be transparent and that integrates research

and engagement tactics. Phase 1 focuses on building up the baseline knowledge of members, and offering varied ways for members to engage with the Project.

Project Webpage and FAQ Resource Document

The project webpage was launched in December 2024 to serve as the central hub for information about the Project (<https://www.pibc.bc.ca/professionalgovernance>). The project webpage contains links to the Work Plan and an introductory *Planning West* article. In addition, an FAQ resource document has been prepared that will be updated on time to time as new and relevant information emerges. The document was last updated on January 16, 2025 with the following:

- Updated content that clarifies and expands on the Office of Superintendent of Professional Governance's (OSPG) duties and considerations when receiving designation assessment applications (the Acting Superintendent e-mailed staff on December 11, 2024 to offer clarifications in the original FAQ document)
- New content on several operational metrics of the regulatory bodies subject to the *Professional Governance Act* (PGA) – number of registrants, total revenues, and total expenditures. The information is based on published annual reports and related documents.
- Updated content that expands on the OSPG's guidance on advocacy.
- New questions relating to the potential financial and non-financial impacts on PIBC, employers, and planners.

Engagement Survey

An engagement survey was launched on December 4, 2024 and closed on February 5, 2025. The purpose of the survey was to gauge member awareness about the topic of professional governance and to identify specific research and engagement needs. The survey received 323 responses. Amongst respondents who are certified RPP and candidate members, the response rate was approximately 18 percent. The relatively high response rate was achieved in part by regular e-news bulletins, social media posts, word-of-mouth within professional networks, and incentives (i.e. survey respondents could opt in to a random draw for one of four complimentary registrations to the 2025 PIBC Annual Conference).

The key takeaways of the survey are (see Attachment A for detailed findings):

1. The Phase 1 Work Plan is providing a valuable framework by focusing on building up the baseline knowledge about the PGA and considerations for the profession; and, offering stakeholders different ways to engage in the process.
2. A plurality of respondents is satisfied with the way the profession is regulated today. A large proportion of respondents is neutral or unsure. A relatively small proportion of respondents is dissatisfied with the status quo.
3. Most respondents had some prior knowledge of the PGA.
4. Most respondents plan to stay engaged on the project.
5. Sufficient number of respondents are interested in engaging peers in an online discussion forum and in focus groups.
6. At this time, respondents are mainly interested in the big picture/strategic issues, namely the advantages and disadvantages of transitioning to the PGA for the profession and PIBC, and defining reserved practices.

Key Informant Interviews

Interviews with key external informants can yield important perspectives, experiences, and advice about professional governance. To date, staff has completed key informant interviews with the senior leadership of the following organizations:

- BC Society of Landscape Architects – December 18, 2024
- Forest Professionals BC – January 7, 2025
- Alberta Professional Planners Institute – January 7, 2025
- Ontario Professional Planners Institute – January 8, 2025
- College of Applied Biologists – January 9, 2025
- Architectural Institute of BC – January 14, 2025
- Atlantic Planners Institute, Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Professional Planners, and New Brunswick Association of Planners – January 14, 2025
- Engineers and Geoscientists BC – January 16, 2025
- BC Institute of Agrologists – January 21, 2025
- Applied Science Technologists & Technicians of British Columbia – February 26, 2025

All of the organizations have been generous in sharing their professional governance journeys and other advice. Staff will be producing an interim report for the Subcommittee. The Subcommittee has also identified other potential key informants to engage in the future, such as the Local Government Management Association, Union of British Columbia Municipalities, and current and former registrants of other PGA regulators.

Other Work Plan Priorities

Detailed scoping is underway for the following Work Plan priorities:

- Focus Groups
- Discussion Paper
- Webinars
- Session at 2025 PIBC Annual Conference
- *Planning West* articles
- Engaging all PIBC committees

At its meeting on February 12, the Subcommittee directed that the proposed discussion paper be a strategic level evaluation of professional governance options. The evaluation would articulate quantitatively and qualitatively the benefits, costs, and risks to the regulator, registrants, employers, and public interest under each option. Subject to detailed scoping, professional governance options may include:

- Status Quo (voluntary, self-regulating member-based organization)
- PIBC transitions to become a regulator under the PGA
- New regulator for the planning profession is established under PGA
- Existing regulator under the PGA takes on the role of regulating the planning profession
- A new allied organization, independent from the regulator, is established to provide member services and advocacy functions.

The Subcommittee also deferred implementation of an online discussion forum until more content has been produced, such as the proposed discussion paper.

Risk Register

To underscore the seriousness and thoroughness with which the Subcommittee is taking its role in guiding the work of the Project, the Subcommittee initiated a discussion in Fall 2024 about events that may affect the conduct of Phase 1 of the Project. The Subcommittee anticipated a high degree of interest and varied perspectives about the professional governance of the planning profession amongst the membership. Risk management is a strategic approach for forecasting and managing uncertainty in projects that have significant consequences (e.g. reputational, financial, operational, etc.). A risk register has been prepared by staff that identifies potential risk events, their likelihood of occurrence, and the potential impacts – beneficial, neutral, or adverse – on the conduct of the Project (see Attachment B). The risk register also identifies appropriate actions to take either before the risk event occurs or afterwards. The risk register will be updated from time to time as new information emerges and per the direction of the Subcommittee.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

At its meeting in November 2024, the PIBC Board endorsed the Phase 1 Work Plan and an initial allocation of \$60,000 from the Strategic Initiatives Reserve Fund to support consultant-based services that may be required in Phase 1. Consultant support is likely needed for the discussion paper and focus group tasks. Detailed scoping is underway.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The Professional Governance Research and Engagement Project is proceeding according to the Work Plan endorsed by the Board in Fall 2024. The first engagement survey garnered over 300 respondents. The first round of key informant interviews is now complete. Detailed scoping is underway on the other priority research and engagement tactics identified in the Work Plan. To support the RPP Regulation Subcommittee's strategic role in guiding the Project, a risk register has been developed and will be updated as new and relevant information emerges. The next meeting of the Subcommittee is anticipated in March.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Jensen RPP, MCIP
Chair of RPP Regulation Subcommittee

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Engagement Survey Presentation Report (Draft)
- B. Risk Register

REFERENCE:

Phase 1 Work Plan
<https://www.pibc.bc.ca/professionalgovernance>