



# Consultations Annual Report 2010-2011



Citizenship and Immigration Canada



# Citizenship and Immigration Canada Consultations Annual Report

## 1.0 Introduction

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) is pleased to present its first annual Report on Consultations, covering the reporting period of April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011.

As part of CIC's vision for building a stronger Canada, consultations activities are a critical element for continuing to develop a nation that is economically, socially and culturally prosperous. CIC uses consultations to further its strategic goals: for example, engaging stakeholders on the federal skilled worker program helps ensure that the migration of immigrants strengthens Canada's economy. Consultations in the development of settlement tools helps encourage newcomers to meet their full potential. Consultations also contribute to departmental efforts in fostering intercultural understanding and an integrated society, and ensuring that those who need protection will find appropriate assistance in Canada. Overall, consultations help shape policies in a way that supports Canada's immigration and humanitarian objectives.

CIC is committed to consulting with the general public, partners and stakeholders on the issues that are of importance to them. Through consultations, the Department gains a greater understanding of the perspectives of a wide range of citizens, stakeholders and experts to help inform program and policy decisions.

In 2010-2011, CIC sought input from stakeholders and the public on a per-issue basis as well as through a variety of ongoing mechanisms. This Consultations Annual Report highlights the various activities which CIC undertook to involve these groups in the Department's decision-making processes.

## 2.0 Consultation Activities: 2010-2011

### 2.1 Immigration

#### *Consulting the Public on Marriages of Convenience*

One of the goals of Canada's *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (IRPA) is to help reunite families. For this reason, Canadian citizens and permanent residents can sponsor their spouse or partner to become a Canadian permanent resident. However, some people abuse spousal sponsorship by entering into what are known as "marriages of convenience" so that they can sidestep Canada's immigration laws.

In the fall of 2010, CIC invited Canadians to participate in an online consultation on the issue of marriages of convenience. The objective of this consultation was to gather input on the magnitude of the problem, as well as to seek opinions and ideas on how to best address it. Over 2,300 general public respondents and more than 80 who self-identified as representatives from stakeholder organizations responded to CIC's call for feedback through the online consultations. Responses to this consultation will help to inform future actions to address marriage fraud.



In addition to the online consultation, the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism hosted in-person public town hall meetings in Brampton, Vancouver and Montreal in the fall of 2010 on the issue of marriages of convenience. These town hall meetings revealed the impact of marriages of convenience on the lives of Canadians and permanent residents.

Over 2,300 general public respondents and nearly 90 from respondents who self-identified as representatives from stakeholder organizations responded to CIC's call for feedback through the online consultations. Responses to this consultation will help to inform future actions to address marriage fraud.

The Department also consulted provinces and territories.

### *The Federal Skilled Worker Program: Stakeholder and Public Consultation*

The Federal Skilled Worker (FSW) program is the Government of Canada's main federal conduit for permanent skilled immigration. The program uses a selection system established in 2002 which looks at the worker's overall capacity to adapt to Canada's labour market. It measures each candidate's score on a grid worth up to 100 points, taking into consideration factors such as their education, work experience, knowledge of English and/or French, and other criteria that have been shown to help them become economically established in Canada.

In February and March 2011, CIC held consultations with stakeholders and the public to seek input on proposed changes to the FSW program. Based on an evaluation of the program, academic research and best-practices in other immigrant-receiving countries, the proposed changes aim to help Canada retain its ability to select immigrants who can make an even greater contribution to Canada's economy.

Stakeholders and the general public were invited to provide feedback through an online questionnaire. Face-to-face meetings and teleconferences were also held with key stakeholders in five cities across the country, and with relevant Provincial and Territorial Government officials. Overall, stakeholders were very supportive of the directions proposed.

CIC consulted on:

- requiring federal skilled workers to have a minimum level of language proficiency;
- making the program more accessible to skilled tradespeople, technicians and apprentices;
- placing greater emphasis on younger immigrants who will adapt more easily and be active members of the work force for a longer time frame;
- redirecting points from work experience to other factors that better predict success in the Canadian work force; and
- reducing the potential for fraudulent job offers.

Overall, a strong majority of participants to both the online and in-person consultations were supportive of making changes to the FSW program's selection system. Participants were broadly supportive of the changes to language requirements as these promote better economic outcomes. Stakeholders supported the general direction of encouraging the immigration of younger



applicants and instituting measures to attract and retain the skilled trades, as well as to rebalance the weight of work experience on the grid in order to shift more weight to the language and age factors and they welcomed the proposal to improve the integrity and genuineness provisions of the arranged employment factor. Overwhelmingly, stakeholders expressed concerns with long processing times.

Changes were recommended regarding language, arranged employment, age, and the authority of visa officers, among other areas of the program. CIC will use these responses, alongside other available data, to further refine the FSWP final proposals.

### *On-line Consultations with the Public and Stakeholders on Ministerial Instructions*

In November 2008, a first set of Ministerial Instructions for immigration officers was developed to identify which new Federal Skilled Worker (FSW) immigration applications are eligible for processing. The first set of Instructions, an initiative under the *Action Plan for Faster Immigration*, was designed to keep the backlog of FSW applications from growing, to reduce wait times for new FSW applications, and to better align new FSW applicants to Canada's labour market needs. As such, a regular review and revision of these Instructions is necessary to ensure they continue to reflect the current reality of Canada's labour market.

To inform the development of the second set of Ministerial Instructions, CIC considered a variety of factors and sought input from many sources to complement the information gathered from ongoing internal monitoring. One of the methods used to seek input from the general public and stakeholders was a consultation conducted via online questionnaires. These consultations looked at factors affecting an immigrant's ability to succeed in Canada's labour market; key labour shortages expected to face Canada in the coming years; and avenues for addressing labour shortages, including but not limited to immigration.

In addition to the online public and stakeholder questionnaires, CIC also held in-person discussions with provinces and territories throughout the winter and spring of 2010 to seek their perspectives on labour market pressures and occupations in demand in their respective regions.

The findings from the online consultations, supported by dialogue with partners and stakeholders, were considered during development of the second set of ministerial instructions. The findings from the online consultations will also be considered in future policy development in related areas.

### *2011 Levels Consultations*

*"From Confederation to the global transformations of recent years, hard-working people have come to Canada from all over the world with their skills and entrepreneurial talents, to reunite with family members, or to seek security and stability. Collectively, they have contributed to the development of Canada's economy, society and culture."*

-- Immigration Levels Planning: Balancing Priorities to Meet Canada's Immigration Objectives (Consultation)



Canada has long been a destination of choice for immigrants. It has one of the highest *per capita* rates of permanent immigration in the world—roughly 0.8 percent in recent years—and has welcomed 3.5 million immigrants in the last 15 years. The current immigration system must balance economic, family reunification and humanitarian goals. CIC’s annual levels plan must manage these goals within a range of admissions set out by CIC’s annual immigration plan. As a result, consultations are a key element in ensuring the continued success of Canada’s immigration program.

Some of CIC’s consultation activities dedicated to immigration levels planning included:

- consultations on immigration levels planning with provinces and territories; and,
- an online stakeholder consultation on 2011 immigration levels to collect stakeholder’s views of immigration objectives and factors to consider when establishing immigration levels.

These consultations ensure the Annual Levels Plan (a part of the *Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration*) is informed by and responsive to changing trends and dynamics, while supporting Canada’s economic, social and humanitarian objectives.

## 2.2 Settlement

### *Settlement and Integration Joint Policy Program Council – Settlement Sector Consultations*

The Settlement and Integration Joint Policy Program Council (SIJPPC) is a mechanism for collaboration, consultation and planning between the settlement sector and federal government. The Council provides a forum for national policy and program dialogue to enhance immigrant settlement outcomes and also provides regular opportunities for information-sharing to allow members to bring back learning and promising practices to the organizations and partners they represent.

Membership of the Council includes CIC, British Columbia, Manitoba and the Canadian Immigrant Settlement Sector Alliance, including the following regional associations: Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies (AMSSA) of British Columbia, Atlantic Regional Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (ARAISA), Manitoba Immigration and Refugee Settlement Sector Association (MIRSSA), and Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant Settlement and Integration Agencies (SAISIA). The Canadian Council for Refugees, Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) and Table de concertation des organismes au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes (TCRI) are observers.

In 2010-11, the Council held one face-to-face meeting and several teleconferences during which CIC consulted with the settlement sector on the following topics:

- introducing new tools to measure newcomers language learning outcomes;
- Plans and Priorities for the Settlement Program 2011-13;
- Language Training Vouchers Pilot;
- Settlement Information Renewal Exercise (SIRE);



- Program Evaluations and Audit of the Administration of Settlement Programs; and
- work of the FPT Settlement Working Group in developing a national set of settlement outcomes and indicators as well as a scan of alternative service delivery models.

The settlement sector also reported on the challenges it faces and recommendations on strengthening its capacity so that it can provide effective analytical and strategic advice to CIC on issues relating to settlement.

In addition, CIC consulted with stakeholders through two sub-groups of the Council that were formed in February 2010:

### *Settlement Modernization Implementation Advisory Group*

The Settlement Modernization Implementation Advisory Group (SMIAG) provides CIC with advice on factors that affect the department's settlement and integration activities and that may affect the priorities, business, and operations of CIC. These determinants include the design and development of high-quality settlement and integration programs which are efficient and responsive to the needs of CIC's varying client population base. Membership in the group includes service provider representatives from across Canada together with CIC regional and NHQ staff.

During 2010-11, four SMIAG teleconferences took place between CIC representatives and the settlement sector on the following key topics:

- implementation of the Modernized Approach (the Settlement Program);
- Modernized Approach Information Sessions in Ontario;
- evaluation of the Settlement Program and Performance Measurement;
- joint information dissemination initiative between CIC and Victim Services of Correctional Services Canada; and
- the implementation of the Best Practices in Settlement Services Website.

This year's SMIAG meetings namely resulted in the organization and delivery of information sessions attended by over 1,000 representatives from immigrant serving organizations across Ontario to facilitate the implementation of the modernization of the Settlement Program. Other achievements included consultations with the settlement sector on the most effective approaches to disseminate information from other federal government departments to newcomers, and identifying and sharing best practices in settlement.

Membership in the group includes service provider representatives from across Canada together with CIC regional and NHQ staff.

### *Performance Measurement Advisory Group*

The Performance Measurement Advisory Group (PMAG) provides CIC with advice on the development of its performance measurement strategy and advises on the development and implementation of data capturing methodology. Membership includes service provider representatives from across Canada together with CIC regional and NHQ staff.

During 2010-11, frequent PMAG teleconferences took place between CIC and the settlement sector. Members were enthusiastic and actively contributed input and opinions on performance measurement issues. Over the course of the year, PMAG contributed towards the development of a refined list of indicators to assess settlement outcomes as well as a refined list of outputs. Since mid-December 2010, PMAG members also have contributed towards the development of an annual performance measurement tool to be used nationally for reporting program results. The group provided examples of current reporting templates and have given feedback at every stage throughout this process. CIC will continue to engage the PMAG in advancing the various components of the Performance Measurement Strategy for the Settlement Program.

### *Settlement Information Renewal Exercise – Newcomer Consultations*

The Settlement Information Renewal Exercise (SIRE) is an initiative to renew the practical settlement-related information CIC provides to newcomers. SIRE aims to ensure that relevant, well-organized, timely and consistent settlement information is offered through in-print, online and in-person channels. During September and October 2010, CIC consulted a total of 76 newcomers during five sessions held in different cities across Canada. During these sessions, participants provided feedback related to their information needs, information-seeking practices and preferences with respect to receiving settlement information from CIC. The feedback received was used to improve the new information content being developed by Integration Branch.

### *Conversation on Skills Development Programming*

In November 2010, the Metropolis Project, in partnership with the Integration Branch at CIC, hosted a Conversation on Skills Development as a component of settlement programming. Skills Development has been identified as one of six settlement service streams within CIC's newly envisioned Settlement Program. The Skills Development stream will mean a greater emphasis on services and programs that teach skills – sometimes referred to as “soft skills” or “cultural competencies” – that are outside the realm of language proficiency, credential recognition, and technical knowledge and competencies.

This conversation brought together experts from academia, policy development and community serving agencies to assess CIC's current policy initiatives on skills development and to offer advice and recommendations on future policy and programming directions. All participants agreed on the importance of increasing soft skills training for newcomers. A number of participants agreed that teaching Canadian civics ought to be an integral part of the integration process, and contributes significantly to increased feelings of belonging by new immigrants, leading to better long-term social outcomes. Integration Branch will build on these findings as it continues to ensure newcomers are provided with the services they need to experience improved settlement outcomes.



## 2.3 Citizenship and Multiculturalism

*“Canada has shown a historic commitment to accommodating and protecting diversity through a strong legislative framework that incorporates equality, democracy and human rights.”*

—Annual Report on the Operation of the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* 2009-2010

### *Social Cohesion: Addressing Radicalization by Building Strong Communities*

To help inform future programming, CIC is considering the role that it should play in building social cohesion and addressing radicalization that leads to violent extremism.

As part of these efforts, CIC hosted a roundtable discussion entitled *Social Cohesion: Addressing Radicalization by Building Strong Communities* on October 21, 2010. The discussion included 10 participants and included community representatives and academics who are engaged in efforts to mitigate radicalization leading to violent extremism.

Given the increase in diversity in Canada and the ever-evolving challenges and responses to racism and discrimination, CIC is re-examining the Government of Canada’s coordinated approach to combating these issues. Roundtable sessions were held in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Montreal, Toronto, and Halifax from July to October 2010. Approximately 80 representatives from the settlement and integration sector, groups involved in multiculturalism and intercultural understanding, community groups involved in racism and discrimination, municipalities, and individual experts and academics were among the attendees.

Participants expressed the desire for CIC to take action to: reinforce Canadian values (freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law), and launch a dialogue on the meaning of citizenship; be cautious regarding who government officials accept as the “voice” of a community; focus on youth; better understand intra-community dynamics and build more intercultural connections; and support initiatives that make communities more resilient by building capacity and developing social capital.

## 2.4 Refugees

*“Each year, millions of people around the world are forced to flee their homeland to escape persecution, war or severe human rights abuses. Often, these people are permanently displaced and are never able to return home.”*

-- Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program

Canada is recognized around the world for its leadership in resettling refugees and people who need protection. Refugees and people needing protection are people in or outside Canada who





fear returning to their home country. In keeping with its humanitarian tradition and international obligations, Canada provides protection to thousands of people every year.

Through CIC's programs, refugees bring their experiences, hopes and dreams to Canada to help build an even richer and more prosperous society for us all. Canada resettles refugees from abroad and takes part in international actions to help prevent refugee situations from developing. CIC also works at home to provide protection to those who make asylum claims here.

Consultation activities pertaining to refugees held during the 2010-2011 fiscal year include:

- the Annual National Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAH) Conference, a forum to discuss issues related to private sponsorship of refugees program;
- consultations on refugee reform regulations with the Canadian Council for Refugees; and
- Roundtable with provinces and territories, to discuss the allocation of additional refugees in preparation for multiyear levels planning.

## 2.5 Admissibility

### *Air Consultative Committee*

The Air Consultative Committee is a government-air industry stakeholder engagement forum chaired by the Canada Border Services Agency at the Assistant Deputy Minister level. CIC participates in this forum along with Transport Canada and other government departments. This forum provides air industry stakeholders, such as Air Canada and Vancouver International Airport Authority, with the opportunity to provide input on CIC programs and activities and for CIC to engage the air industry on new or upcoming policy developments and directions.

Through the Air Consultative Committee (ACC), discussions between air industry stakeholders, CIC and other federal partners such as the CBSA and Transport Canada have focused primarily on program issues related to the Transit Without Visa program and China Transit Trial as well as broader policy issues related to air travel and migration management and control.

## 2.6 Mechanisms for Engaging Stakeholders

While many of CIC's engagement activities are undertaken due to the emergence of a particular issue, other consultations take place regularly as a means of allowing for continued communication between the Department and its various stakeholders.

### *Deputy Minister's Advisory Council*

In December 2010, CIC Deputy Minister Neil Yeates established the Deputy Minister's Advisory Council (DMAC), a group of individuals pulled from a cross-section of organizations which provides the DM with strategic advice and diverse perspectives concerning immigration, refugees, multiculturalism and citizenship.

With the goal of exploring program and policy issues from a broader perspective, the Council responds to specific issues identified as a priority by the Deputy Minister and provides independent advice accordingly. The role of the Council is limited to an advisory capacity, and not a have decision-making role.

DMAC meetings are held on a quarterly basis. Since its inception, the Council has had two meetings which took place in December 2010 and March 2011. Issues addressed to-date have been focused on labour market needs, including (though not exclusive to) economic immigration and the future of temporary foreign workers in Canada. Stakeholder input allows CIC to strengthen the management of economic immigration to contribute to Canada's economic and social fabric, alongside other immigration channels, such as family reunification and refugees.

Currently, the members of the DM Advisory Council are as follows:

- **Fariborz Birjandian**  
Executive Director, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society
- **Ruth (Schwartz) Goldbloom**  
Member, Chairperson's Advisory Group, Canadian Judicial Council, and Board Trustee of Canada's National Museum of Immigration at Pier 21
- **David Goldstein**  
President and Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Industry Association of Canada
- **Roger Gibbins**  
President and Chief Executive Officer, Canada West Foundation
- **Daniel Hiebert**  
Professor of Geography, University of British Columbia
- **Zabeen Hirji**  
Chief Human Resources Officer, Royal Bank of Canada and Co-Chair of the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council
- **Andrew Jackson**  
Chief Economist and National Director, Social and Economic Policy, Canadian Labour Congress
- **Daniel Kelly**  
Senior Vice-President, Legislative Affairs for the Canadian Federation of Independent Business
- **Marie Mc Andrew**  
Professor in the Department of Educational Administration and Foundations, University of Montreal
- **Jayson Myers**  
President and CEO, Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters
- **Peter Showler**  
Director, Refugee Forum (Human Rights Research and Education Centre, University of Ottawa)
- **Janice Gross Stein**  
Professor of Conflict Management in the Department of Political Science and Director of the Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto

### *Deputy Minister Regional Roundtables*

In 2011, CIC introduced a Senior Management Outreach program, an initiative which sets out to actively leverage ongoing senior management activities to reach out to key stakeholder groups that are involved in or affected by the Department's policies, programs or issues. Deputy Minister (DM) regional roundtables are a key component to this outreach program, linking the DM with key stakeholders during regional business travel as a supplement to ongoing Departmental business. Roundtable meetings are added to the DM's travel itineraries to allow him to have general discussions with a variety of stakeholders. These meetings aim to help forge better linkages with a wide range of stakeholders and provide the DM with insight for decision-making.



As part of visits to CIC regional offices, the DM held the following roundtables with stakeholders representing key departmental interests:

- Halifax, Nova Scotia – February 1, 2011
- Vancouver, British Columbia – February 7, 2011

As part of his visit to BCY Region, the DM held a roundtable with a variety of stakeholders representing key departmental interests in British Columbia. Broad employer groups expressed the need to increase employer awareness regarding CIC immigration programs. While the employer sector representatives are well versed with the Provincial Nominee Program and generally familiar with the TFW Program, it was clear that there was little “brand recognition” for CIC and its other programs such as the FSW Program and CEC. Next steps include the plan to develop a stronger connection with employers in the region.

