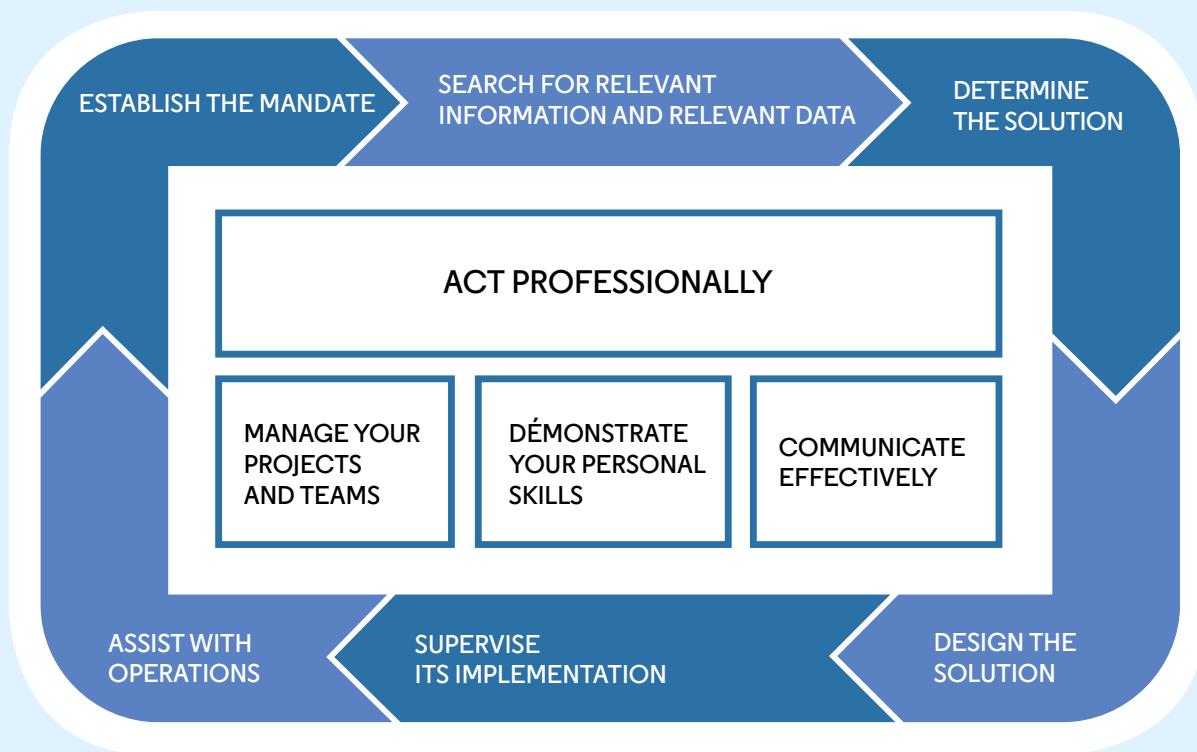


Since last November, engineers have been able to rely on a new tool to guide them in practicing their profession and developing their professional competencies: the reference framework for engineers' professional competencies.

THE REFERENCE FRAMEWORK: a tool for all engineers



Designed by experienced engineers, this reference framework sheds light on all the competencies that engineers need to master in the practice of their profession. All OIQ members are encouraged to refer to it.

The values inherent in the profession, such as responsibility, ethics, competence and social commitment, are a common basis for all engineers. "The reference framework can be applied to all engineers, whatever their field, expertise or experience level," explains Julie Lemieux, Compe-

tency Development Advisor at the Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec. This universal tool was designed to make it clear to all engineers what is expected of them in terms of competencies. In this way, it allows the OIQ to fulfill its mission to better protect the public by helping engineers improve their practice.

COMPETENCIES IN TEN AREAS

The behaviours outlined in the reference framework are applied to ten areas. The four fundamental areas are located in the centre of the model. "They are the very core of

all engineers' action," explains Julie Lemieux. Six other areas revolve around the four fundamental ones. "They are directly linked to the life cycle of a project," mentions Julie Lemieux.

These areas encompass much more than just technical competencies. They include knowledge (knowledge), competencies (know-how) and other skills (self-management skills). This is not a tool that the OIQ will force engineers to use, but rather a reference tool "designed by engineers for engineers," emphasizes Julie Lemieux. "It is the product of general consensus."

Panels of experienced engineers who work in industry, consulting engineering and public service helped shape this reference framework. It was then validated with an OIQ member survey in December. Over a thousand engineers took part in this process.

AN OBJECTIVE TOOL

The reference framework is an objective tool that can be used in many different ways. Although it was primarily created to guide engineers in improving their practice, the reference framework is also a reference for inspecting members. Furthermore, OIQ members will find it extremely helpful in targeting training activities when they prepare their professional development plan.

And this includes training activities and education programs that will now be based on the behaviours outlined in the reference framework.

TARGETED COMPETENCY PROFILES

A series of competency profiles have been prepared using the common basis provided by the reference framework. Each profile covers the same competency areas as those in the reference framework, but focuses on a specific field. In other words, each profile reflects the reality of one field in particular.

Here are the most recent additions concerning building electricity: <http://bit.ly/electricitebatiment> and industrial electricity: <http://bit.ly/electriciteindustrielle>.

Priority has been given to the "at risk" fields targeted by the supervision program since the beginning of the

A DOZEN COMPETENCY PROFILES HAVE BEEN PREPARED TO DATE. THEY SPECIFICALLY CONCERN TEMPORARY STRUCTURES, HOISTING EQUIPMENT AND AUTOMATION SYSTEMS.

competency profile development process. Other sectors – onsite treatment, building structure, geotechnical engineering, temporary structures – are currently being scrutinized by the committees and work groups that define the competency criteria specific to each sector. "We take certain sectors seriously and give them priority to ensure that we fulfill our mission of protecting the public," points out Julie Lemieux.

Many competency profiles still need to be prepared. The OIQ hopes to add two to five more per year in the coming years.

"The competency profiles are living tools," Julie Lemieux tells us. "We are constantly talking to teams of engineers in an effort to update the profiles. The intrinsic value of these profiles depends on the involvement and comments of engineers. This is the best way to improve them so that they stay relevant and useful," she explains.

The reference framework for engineers' professional competencies and the competency profiles can be consulted on line on the Web site of the Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec at competences@oiq.qc.ca. They can also be found in the professional practice guide (*Guide de pratique professionnelle*): gpp@oiq.qc.ca.