



POLICY

POLICY	Development of Engineers and Geoscientists BC Professional Practice Guidelines
NUMBER OF POLICY	CO-21-105
DATE OF POLICY	September 24, 2021
APPROVED BY	Council

PURPOSE

To create a policy for the development of professional practice guidelines (PPGs) including Council's role in the approval process.

APPLICATION AND SCOPE

As per the *Professional Governance Act* (the *Act*), Engineers and Geoscientists BC is responsible for establishing, monitoring, and enforcing the standards of practice, conduct, and competence for engineering/geoscience professionals. One way that Engineers and Geoscientists BC exercises these responsibilities is by publishing and enforcing the use of PPGs, as per Section 7.3.1 of the Engineers and Geoscientists BC Bylaws (the *Bylaws*).

The following are the specific objectives of PPGs:

- Describe expectations and obligations of professional practice that engineering/geoscience professionals are expected to have regard for in relation to the specific professional activity outlined in the guidelines by:
 - specifying tasks and/or services that engineering/geoscience professionals should complete;
 - referring to professional obligations under the *Act*, the *Bylaws*, and other regulations/legislation, including the primary obligation to protect the safety, health, and welfare of the public and the environment; and
 - describing the established norms of practice in this area.
- Describe the roles and responsibilities of the various participants/stakeholders involved in the professional activities. The document should assist in delineating the roles and responsibilities of the various participants/stakeholders, which may include the professional of record, owners/clients, authorities having jurisdiction, and contractors.

- Define the skill sets that are consistent with the training and experience required to carry out these professional activities.
- Provide guidance on the use of assurance documents, so the appropriate considerations have been addressed (both regulatory and technical) for the specific professional activities that were carried out.
- Provide guidance on how to meet the quality management requirements under the *Act* and the Bylaws when carrying out the professional activities identified in these PPGs.

COUNCIL'S ROLE

The Engineers and Geoscientists BC Council is responsible for approving the publication of PPGs as per Bylaw 7.3.1 (1), “*EGBC shall publish professional practice guidelines approved by the Council on a public website maintained by EGBC and shall update professional practice guidelines as necessary.*”

PPGs are focused on specific areas of practice or specific activities within an area of practice; therefore, Councillors are not expected to review and approve the technical content of PPGs, nor are they expected to act as subject matter experts.

Council approval of PPGs is based on:

- the assurance that the standard guideline development process was followed, and
- confirmation that a robust and appropriate review and consultation process was followed.

OVERVIEW – PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE GUIDELINE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The Professional Practice, Standards and Development (PPSD) team follows an operational step by step manual covering all aspects of the guideline development process in detail when project managing the development or revision of PPGs. The following section provides an overview of the key steps in the guideline development. The attached flowchart provides a visual overview of the process (see Figure 1).

GUIDELINE IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

(I) New Guidelines

There are four ways in which new PPGs can be identified for development:

1. **Demand-Based** – Request from Government, industry, or the professional community
2. **Practice-Based** – Identified as an issue through tracked practice inquiries, practice reviews, audits, disciplinary proceedings, or industry/public feedback brought to the attention of the Council
3. **Strategic-Based** – An Engineers and Geoscientists BC initiative based on analyzing directions of Government and industry

4. **Reaction-Based** - As a result of an engineering/geoscience failure or near-miss

(II) **Existing Guidelines**

Existing PPGs are reviewed five years following the most recent publication date to determine whether a revision is necessary. If needed, exact timing is determined based on the scope of the revision, resource requirements, and existing priorities. There may be situations in which a PPG is revised before the five year review date, which is typically a result of a significant change in practice expectations or obligations within demand-side legislation.

PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

Once the need for a new topic or revision to an existing topic for a PPG has been identified as outlined above, the Director of PPSD and the Associate Director of PPSD undertake a risk assessment process to determine whether to proceed with the development of the PPG.

Considerations include:

- **Risk Assessment:** What is the risk to the public and/or environment of not proceeding with or not updating a PPG on a specific topic?
- **Approach:** Can the same benefit be achieved through the development of a practice advisory or some alternative avenue of communication?
- **Existing Guidance:** Does similar guidance exist elsewhere?
- **Support:** Does the Professional Practice Advisory Group support the development of a PPG on the topic?
- **Resource Needs:** Is there staff available to project manage the guideline development? Is compensation available for the subject matter experts? Is there availability of external funding?
- **Conflicting Priorities:** Are there other priorities preventing authors and/or staff from proceeding?
- **Timing:** Can the development of a PPG be delayed to a subsequent year?
- **Partnership:** Is there an opportunity to handle areas of practice overlap with other regulatory bodies?

CONTENT DEVELOPMENT

Once the decision has been made to proceed with a PPG, a member of the PPSD department, who is also a registrant, is assigned to project manage the development of the PPG. The Communications department is notified of the decision to proceed with a PPG, and they notify registrants regarding development of the PPG. The Director of PPSD, Associate Director of PPSD, and project manager engage advisory groups, divisions, committees, and other relevant stakeholders to identify potential authors and reviewers, and staff seek out opportunities to partner with stakeholder groups such as Government Ministries and other regulatory bodies. The Professional Practice Advisory Group is consulted by staff to provide input on the makeup of the author group, review group, and stakeholder consultation.

In general, PPGs have 2-5 authors with one typically acting as the lead. The exact scope of the document and the timeline for developing content is determined collaboratively between the authors, guideline partners (if applicable), and staff. Engineers and Geoscientists BC has a PPG template that is used as a starting point for the author group to develop content. Once content is drafted, it is subject to review and consultation as outlined below.

REVIEW AND CONSULTATION PROCESS

A robust review and consultative approach is followed when developing new PPGs or revising existing PPGs, as outlined in the following sections.

New Professional Practice Guidelines:

Review Group - Typically, a review group for a new PPG is developed consisting of 10-20 subject matter experts and relevant stakeholders. Examples include consultants from small and large firms, representatives from municipalities, government ministries, and Indigenous communities, and participants from relevant industry groups. The review group is typically asked to comment on the draft PPG once in the early stages of development and once at a later stage in the development, and their involvement can include participation in multiple review meetings with the entire review group and authors in attendance.

The author group must consider and document the decision-making process with regard to comments received from the review group. On matters where agreement cannot be reached, the Professional Practice Advisory Group will be consulted.

Consultation - After the review group's comments have been considered by the author group, the PPG is sent for consultation to relevant advisory groups, divisions, committees, and other applicable groups within Engineers and Geoscientists BC. The Professional Practice Advisory Group is always included in the consultation of PPGs. Consultation with external stakeholders may also be appropriate, particularly if endorsement of the PPG by another organization is desired.

Similar to the process with the review group, the author group must consider and document the decision-making process with regard to comments received from the various groups participating in consultation. On matters where agreement cannot be reached, the Professional Practice Advisory Group will be consulted.

Revisions to Professional Practice Guidelines

Review Group - See process above for new PPGs

Consultation - See process above for new PPGs

NOTE: With respect to revisions of PPGs where the revisions are of a minor or clarifying nature and the revisions do not significantly change content (i.e. formatting changes, slight wording revisions, or minor content changes), these PPGs do not go through a review group or consultation process unless the PPG is published jointly with, or is endorsed by, another organization. In that case the other organization will be consulted on the minor changes.

COUNCIL APPROVAL

After the review and consultation process is completed, PPGs are submitted to Council using the approved template *Council Open Memo - Template for PPG.docx*. Council approval of the PPG can be given based on the confirmation within the memo that the following criteria have been met:

- The standard guideline development process was followed; and
- A robust and appropriate review and consultation process was followed.

Council approves both new and revised PPGs, however PPG revisions of a minor or clarifying nature do not require Council approval.

PUBLICATION

Every PPG, regardless of whether new or a revision, undergoes editorial and legal review prior to publication. The project manager resolves any comments from editorial and legal review, consulting with the author group if necessary. The Communications department then undertakes final design and publishes the PPG on the Engineers and Geoscientists BC website. Once posted, the Communications department notifies registrants regarding publication of the PPG.

REVIEW DATES

April 25, 2008 (CO-08-59) – Approved by Council

April 1, 2011 (CO-11-89) – Amended by Council

April 27, 2018 (CO-18-33) – Amended by Council

September 24, 2021 (CO-21-105) – Amended by Council

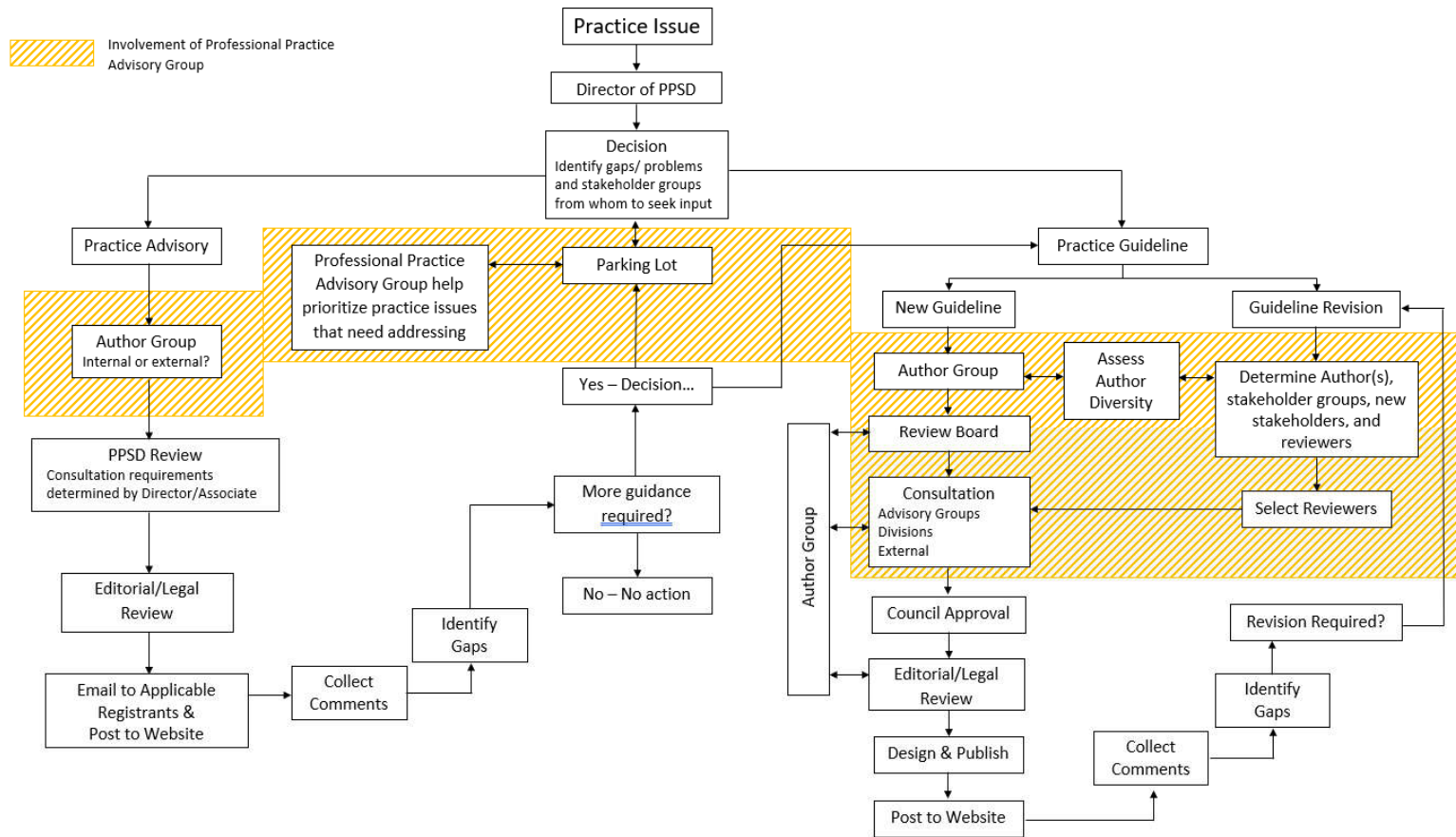


Figure 1 – Guidance Development Flow Chart