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*A publication of the Association of  
Canadian Engineering Companies*



*Engineers' hands connect our world*

## The Budget 2009 Infrastructure Stimulus Package

### Maximizing Benefits to Canadians

On January 27, 2009, the federal government unveiled a massive infrastructure stimulus package that will direct over \$20 billion in new funding for infrastructure projects across the country – this is on top of previously announced federal funding equaling over \$9 billion over the next two years. Clearly these needed investments

The challenge now for governments at all levels is to ensure that these funds are spent and allocated in such a way as to ensure the maximum payback for Canadians, in terms of how, when, and why projects are chosen and procured. As trusted advisors to society, who have extensive experience with implementation of world renowned



in our nation's roads, water systems, learning institutions, recreational facilities, and so forth, will provide a much-needed short-term economic stimulus, but perhaps more importantly, they will create longer-term economic opportunities and a better quality of life for all Canadians.

infrastructure projects, the consulting engineering community is able to offer these recommendations on how the stimulus package can be implemented for the maximum, most expeditious, impact for Canadians:



In the January 27, 2009 Budget, the federal government unveiled a long list of infrastructure-related investments, programs, and targeted funding. The list, along with their two-year funding commitments (2009-2011), includes:

- Green Infrastructure Fund – \$400 million
- Communities Component of Building Canada Fund – \$500 million
- Accelerating payments under base funding – \$989 million
- Infrastructure Stimulus Fund – \$4 billion
- Recreational Infrastructure Fund – \$500 million
- Recreational trails – \$25 million
- First Nations School Construction – \$200 million
- First Nations Water and Wastewater – \$165 million
- First Nations Critical Community Services Infrastructure – \$150 million
- Infrastructure at universities and colleges – \$2 billion
- Canada Foundation for Innovation Infrastructure – \$50 million
- Institute for Quantum Computing (University of Waterloo) – \$50 million
- Arctic Research Infrastructure – \$87 million
- Modernizing federal laboratories – \$250 million
- Canada Health Infoway – \$500 million
- Extending broadband to rural communities – \$200 million
- Improving rail systems – \$57 million
- Federal bridges – \$37 million
- Small craft harbours – \$100 million
- Repair / restoration of federal buildings – \$120 million
- Enhancing accessibility to federal buildings – \$24 million
- Consulting work to replace *Manège militaire* in Quebec City – \$2 million
- Accelerating action on federal contaminated sites – \$81 million
- Aviation Security Infrastructure – \$296 million

These initiatives are in addition to other federal programs that have been introduced over the past several years. These programs, with their two-year funding commitments, include:

- Gas Tax Fund – \$4 billion
- Building Canada Fund – \$2.58 billion
- Fund for Gateways and Border Crossings – \$618 million
- PPP Canada Inc – \$369 million
- Pacific Gateway – \$262 million
- Other sunseting infrastructure programs – \$933 million

- **Ensure projects are outsourced to the private sector:** Several jurisdictions in Canada continue to perform engineering and other professional infrastructure design work inhouse. Not only does outsourcing work to the private sector bring greater expertise and innovation, but is the best way to ensure a real stimulative impact. Provinces and municipalities who perform design and construction work inhouse will be losing out on the technical expertise of the consulting engineering industry, and will be providing no tangible economic stimulus.
- **Minimize approval processes, duplication and red tape:** The 2009 Budget identified the current cumbersome infrastructure approvals process as a key barrier to the expeditious commencement of infrastructure projects. All recipients of infrastructure funding must work together to ensure that approvals and procurement processes are streamlined, red tape is avoided, and duplication of processes is eliminated.
- **Select professionals using qualifications-based selection:** Experts from across Canada and throughout North America have unanimously recommended a process of qualifications-based selection (QBS) to procure engineering and other professional services as the best way to ensure value and quality on all infrastructure and other capital projects. This QBS process is best captured in the *InfraGuide Best Practices Guide to Selecting a Professional Consultant* – copies of which can be downloaded here:

[www.thebestpractice.ca](http://www.thebestpractice.ca).

Procurement based on QBS will result in substantially higher quality projects, better value for the taxpayer, more sustainable projects, and lower construction, operation and maintenance costs.

- **Don't compromise long-term strategic considerations for expediency:** In the rush to roll out projects quickly, governments may fall into the trap of neglecting the key question of "Are they the right projects for Canadians?" Projects need to be chosen based on their strategic, long-term value to Canadians, not just on how quick shovels can be put in the ground. Projects must be chosen based on their ability to deliver long-term economic, social, environmental, and safety dividends to Canadians. Further, long-term, strategic infrastructure considerations allow for all levels of government to plan long-term, strategic infrastructure investment and work towards sound asset management and sustainable funding for the future.

## Conclusion

Consulting engineers are ready, willing, and able to work with all orders of government, First Nations, postsecondary institutions, and others to implement infrastructure projects quickly, sustainably, and innovatively. Canadian consulting engineers are prized globally for their commitment to quality and customer service, and have been leaders in the environmental building and design movement. They are an invaluable, trusted resource to society and to governments who are seeking a quick and efficient rollout of the Budget 2009 initiatives.



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