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CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION OF NEW BRUNSWICK
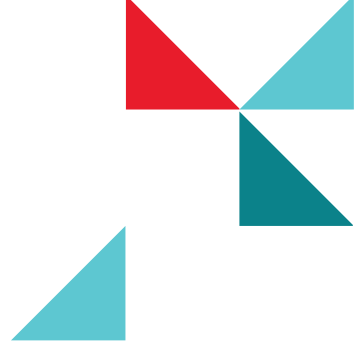**CANB**
ASSOCIATION DE LA CONSTRUCTION DU NOUVEAU-BRUNSWICK

IMMIGRATION PATHWAYS INTO THE CONSTRUCTION WORKFORCE

A Report on the 100-Day Challenge

About This Report

This report is a review of the 100-Day Challenge focused on immigration pathways into the construction workforce, which took place between November 2023 and June 2024. This 100-Day Challenge was facilitated by Pond-Deshpande Centre's NouLAB and made possible thanks to support from the construction industry, government, and community partners. Project funding was provided by the Labour Force Adjustment Committee established by the Government of New Brunswick and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. The report includes a review of activities and outputs, an evaluation of objectives, and a summary of learning and recommendations for sustaining the work beyond the 100 days.

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About Pond-Deshpande Centre and NouLAB

The Pond-Deshpande Centre (PDC) is home to NouLAB, New Brunswick's social innovation partner of choice. Founded at the University of New Brunswick in 2012 with a visionary donation from entrepreneurs Gerry Pond and Gururaj and Jaishree Deshpande, PDC uses social innovation and social entrepreneurship to address and help solve some of society's most pressing challenges. We develop inclusive workforces, invigorate civic innovation, and create more just economic systems. Fundamentally, we bring people together to solve complex challenges.

Some of our past projects include the Economic Immigration Lab and the Early Childhood Education Lab. Much like a social innovation lab, the 100-Day Challenge initiative brings people together who share a passion and drive to solve a long-standing problem. NouLAB acts as a guide through the 100 days, where participants define and analyze the problem, develop solutions, and rapidly test those solutions. PDC is the only organization in Canada that is licensed to deliver the 100-Day Challenge.
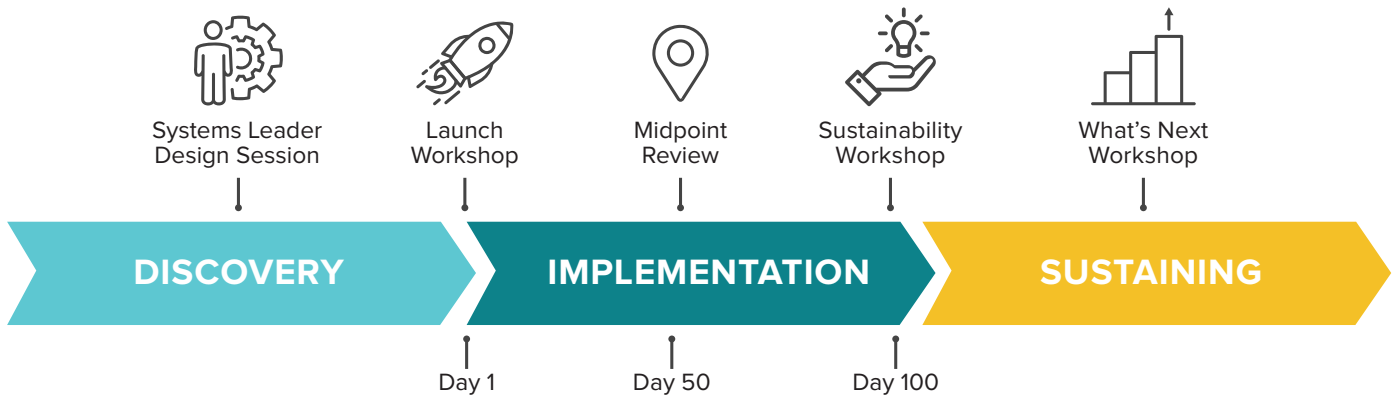
Table of Contents

What Is a 100-Day Challenge?

The 100-Day Challenge was developed by Re!nstitute, an international non-profit. It is a proven methodology that brings people together to define and analyze a problem, develop solutions, and implement those solutions over 100 days. The 100-Day Challenge fosters collaboration between stakeholders across various sectors, fostering a sense of urgency, producing achievable ideas, and encouraging experimentation. This approach empowers those with expertise and lived experience to collaborate, innovate, and execute, setting the community on a path toward lasting, systemic change. This methodology builds on the long-standing social innovation lab practice that PDC's NouLAB has led over the last decade.

How Does a 100-Day Challenge Work?

The 100-Day Challenge is structured around three phases, each designed to maximize collaboration, innovation, and impact. PDC facilitators act as guides and support multi-stakeholder participants through the phases of this journey, including by facilitating six workshops and supporting weekly team meetings.

Challenge participants form teams and work closely with their facilitators during workshops and weekly team meetings to develop solutions to complex problems. Participants are encouraged to think big, brainstorm all possible solutions, and narrow down to tangible solutions. Solutions come to life as teams work together to create and test prototypes (minimum viable products) to solve the problem. By the end of the 100 days, the group has feasible, viable, and tested solutions ready to be handed back to systems leaders for implementation.

| Systems Leader Design Session | Launch Workshop | Midpoint Review | Sustainability Workshop | What's Next Workshop |

DISCOVERY → **IMPLEMENTATION** → **SUSTAINING**

Day 1   Day 50   Day 100

Discovery Phase (2–3 months): This initial phase, conducted by PDC to help set up the challenge, involves defining the challenge's focus with stakeholders and recruiting systems leaders. Systems leaders and community conveners collaborate to set ambitious goals and create a supportive environment for innovation.

Sustaining (3 months): The sustaining phase is a three-month period that follows the 100-day implementation phase. It focuses on embedding and amplifying the insights and improvements achieved. Systems leaders implement action plans developed during the what's-next workshop to solidify the challenge's impact.

Launch Workshop: A two-day, in-person workshop where each 100-Day Challenge team maps the current system, sets a 100-day goal, builds a work plan, and elects its team leads. Day 1 of 100 typically begins the day after the launch workshop.

Midpoint Review: A dedicated workshop at the halfway mark allows the teams to reflect on their progress, learn from experiences, and make necessary adjustments to their approach for the remaining period.

Sustainability Workshop: Near the end of the 100 days, teams gather to celebrate achievements, share lessons learned, and draft goals for the sustaining phase. This ensures that the momentum and gains are maintained and built beyond the 100 days.

What's-Next Workshop: A virtual or in-person work session in which the teams and systems leaders work together to launch a sustaining project. They refine a sustaining goal and develop an action plan so that learnings will be integrated and solutions and progress sustained well beyond the 100 days.

Implementation Phase (3 months): The implementation phase consists of a series of workshops that support the challenge teams to uncover barriers and opportunities, set ambitious but achievable 100-day goals that push beyond current limits, and develop innovative plans to achieve these goals. This phase is crucial for team formation, goal setting, and planning.

100-Day Challenge Roles

PDC Facilitators: The facilitators guide the process, ensuring it remains on track and productive. They help clarify goals, facilitate workshops, and support the teams in achieving their shared objectives.

Project Convenors: These are key stakeholders who initiate and champion the need for an innovation challenge. Project conveners may include funders, systems leaders, and other crucial stakeholders who are invested in addressing a complex problem. They support the recruitment of the systems leaders and often also participate in the systems leaders team.

Systems Leaders: Key stakeholders with the influence and authority to drive changes within their systems. They set the vision, support the challenge goals, and help remove obstacles. Systems leaders build out the focus area for the 100-Day Challenge and propose members for the 100-Day Challenge team(s).

Challenge Participants: These individuals engage in the implementation phase of the challenge process, contributing ideas, efforts, and expertise to help achieve the challenge goals. They can come from various sectors and roles relevant to the challenge's focus.

Challenge Teams: Participants form small groups tasked with developing and implementing innovative solutions to meet the challenge's goals. They work collaboratively, leveraging diverse skills and perspectives. The teams should be composed of individuals who are passionate and knowledgeable about the challenge area and who are open to new ideas and ways of working. Persons with lived experience of the issue being addressed should also be included on the team.

Team Leads: At the launch workshop, the 100-Day teams sets its 100-Day goal, creates its work plan, and elects its team leads. Team leads are responsible for coordinating efforts, leading weekly team meetings, ensuring tasks are completed, and maintaining the team's focus.

Challenge Outcomes

Similar to a social innovation lab, a 100-Day Challenge has four primary outputs:

1. **PROTOTYPED SOLUTIONS READY FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AND/OR SCALING:** Throughout the 100-Day Challenge, promising ideas emerge. The teams further refines these ideas into potential solutions, and builds and tests minimal viable products (prototypes). By the end of the 100 days, the best ideas are ready for further development. With additional support and investments, these ideas develop into breakthrough solutions, often in the form of new services, programs, policies, or ways of working.

2. **INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY FOR INNOVATION:** Individuals who complete a 100-Day Challenge leave with new capacities and skills, and the ability to replicate the challenge's approach to problem-solving in t heir work and communities.

3. **CONTENT EXPERTISE:** The 100-Day Challenge stimulates new knowledge and learning about complex issues, develops a more comprehensive understanding of the context and dynamics at play, and builds awareness and readiness for the participants to tackle the issues beyond the 100 days.

4. **NETWORKS AND TRUST:** 100-Day Challenges foster new networks characterized by increased trust and collaboration. People leave the challenge with new relationships and connections that allow their work to be more effective and allow them to lead change initiatives inside and outside of their organizations.

Who Should Participate?

Meaningful social innovation work relies on diverse stakeholder participation. Bringing together multiple perspectives leads to the development of the best possible solutions. When building the 100-Day Challenge teams, NouLAB works with the systems leaders to recruit a diversity of stakeholders to ensure that it includes participants with first-hand knowledge of the challenge, who are open to new ways of working, and who have a passion for creating positive impact for their communities.

This diversity in perspectives must be multi-disciplinary or "horizontal," meaning that there is representation across sectors from community organizations, the private sector, government and academia. Equally important is diversity in decision-making power, known as "vertical" diversity. People working with lower levels of influence and decision-making power often have different perspectives from those working with high levels of influence and decision-making power—even in the same organization. Working with diverse perspectives creates empathy among participants and helps them understand the experience of the humans who are most impacted by the problem being addressed.

When to Use a 100-Day Challenge?

- ✓ You are facing a challenge that involves various stakeholders, and the change needed is visible but there is no obvious path to a solution.

- ✓ Elements of the problem are far beyond one individual's or organization's realm of influence.

- ✓ A strategic plan can't help you because the problem is too dynamic and uncertain.

- ✓ Multiple stakeholders are willing to engage.

- ✓ Stakeholders are committed to supporting new ways of working and solving problems.

- ✓ Stakeholders are committed to investing and shifting time and resources to support the work and future implementation of the outputs.

100-Day Challenge: Immigration and Construction

The Problem Behind the Immigration and Construction 100-Day Challenge

In recent years, especially the past five, New Brunswick (NB) has seen unprecedented population growth following a period of decline and stagnation. Since 2021, the province has broken population growth records every year.[1] Although we see people migrating to New Brunswick from other provinces, most of this growth is due to international immigration. In a province that saw little growth for much of the 2000s, this is good news for communities and local economies. However, challenges are arising across the province in planning for and managing record-level growth.

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1. Robert Jones, "New Brunswick Smashes Population Growth Record Set Last Year," CBC, September 29, 2023, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/population-growth-record-1.6981745.

A Report on the 100-Day Challenge

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To support welcoming so many new New Brunswickers, we need to accelerate the building of everything from schools to homes to wastewater infrastructure and commercial space. The construction workforce is at the centre of all this building.

Current labour market data indicates that people aged 15–24 who are about to enter New Brunswick's labour force make up only 11% of the population. That number is expected to remain unchanged by 2033. Over that same period, 24% of the workforce will retire.[2]

Projections suggest that by 2033, the construction sector will need to recruit and retain as many as 9,200 additional workers to keep pace with expansion and retirements.[3]

This construction workforce shortage is not unique to the New Brunswick construction workforce. Across the country, provinces are struggling to find construction workers. By 2033 in Canada, 263,400 workers will retire from the construction labour force, which is 21% of the sector's current labour force. Over the same period, an increase in construction demand will require an additional 88,400 workers. Between an increased demand and an aging labour force, the Canadian construction sector will need to hire 351,800 workers by 2033.[4]

New Brunswick is competing with most, if not all, provinces for a skilled construction workforce. If population growth continues at even a moderate pace, the demand for housing and infrastructure in New Brunswick will continue at an unattainable pace.

New Brunswick has several tools at its disposal, including enhanced training in the secondary and post-secondary sectors, which it is already pursuing. But training and upskilling of the existing population will not be enough to meet the needs of the construction workforce in the rapid time frame needed.
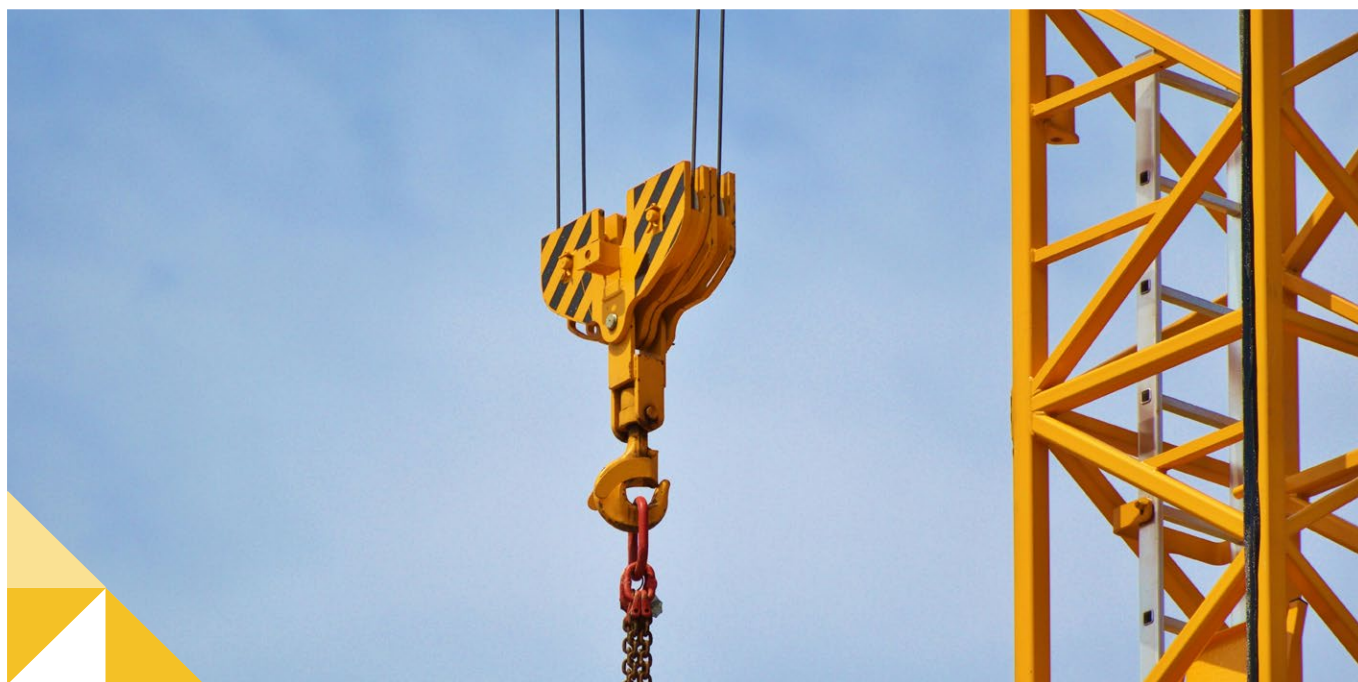
2. *National Summary: Construction and Maintenance Industry — An Assessment of Construction Labour Markets from 2024 to 2033,* BuildForce Canada, March 2024, 5.

3. Construction and Maintenance Industry — *New Brunswick Highlights 2024-2033,* BuildForce Canada, March 2024, 2.

4. 2024 Canada Const & Maint Looking Forward.pdf, BuildForce Canada, March 2024, page 8

Immigration Pathways into the Construction Workforce

A Report on the 100-Day Challenge

POND DESHPANDE CENTRE at UNB | NouLAB

New Brunswick has had some success in a variety of other sectors in building immigration pathways, including through the Atlantic Immigration Program, and specifically in the healthcare sector, which has been hiring more internationally trained nurses; however, due to the unique and fluid nature of the construction sector and work, the construction sector has not been actively engaged in immigration at scale. Indeed, only 4.9 percent of the construction workforce is made up of immigrants compared to 8 percent in all other industries in New Brunswick.[5]

Although these challenges are recognized by all orders of government and by industry, innovative solutions are lacking and the pathways that currently exist for immigration are lengthy and do not meet the needs of the construction sector.

Traditional methods of attracting people to and retaining them in the New Brunswick construction sector are not working, and systemic barriers are hindering current immigration efforts. These challenges called for a new approach that would increase the representation of immigrants working in the New Brunswick construction sector to support the sector to meet the demands of our growing New Brunswick population today and into the future.

Theory of Change

A theory of change illustrates how and why a desired change is expected to happen. It maps out the logical steps needed to achieve long-term goals and highlights the assumptions at each stage. For this project, the theory of change keeps us focused on what can be accomplished beyond the 100 days, emphasizing the significance of this work for New Brunswick's future.

If New Brunswick's construction sector is supported to leverage immigration for filling vacancies through the rapid-prototype 100-Day Challenge approach...

then it will swiftly ramp up to meet the infrastructure demands of a growing population...

which will lead to the timely and cost-effective completion of vital projects...

**ultimately fostering economic stability and robust community growth.**

5. 2024 NB Constr Maint Looking Forward.pdf, BuildForce Canada, March 2024, page 20

"How Might We" Statement

A "how might we" (HMW) statement is a creative problem-solving tool that frames a challenge as an opportunity for innovation. It is designed to encourage open-ended thinking and generate actionable ideas by posing the problem as a question. We use HMW statements to track progress through the problem-solving process. As we uncover new insights, we refine our focus by creating new HMW statements, ensuring our approach remains adaptive and responsive to emerging learnings.

> **"How Might We" Statement at the Start of the Project:**
> How might we empower New Brunswick's construction sector to swiftly harness immigration, ensuring the timely development of essential infrastructure to support the province's rapidly growing population?
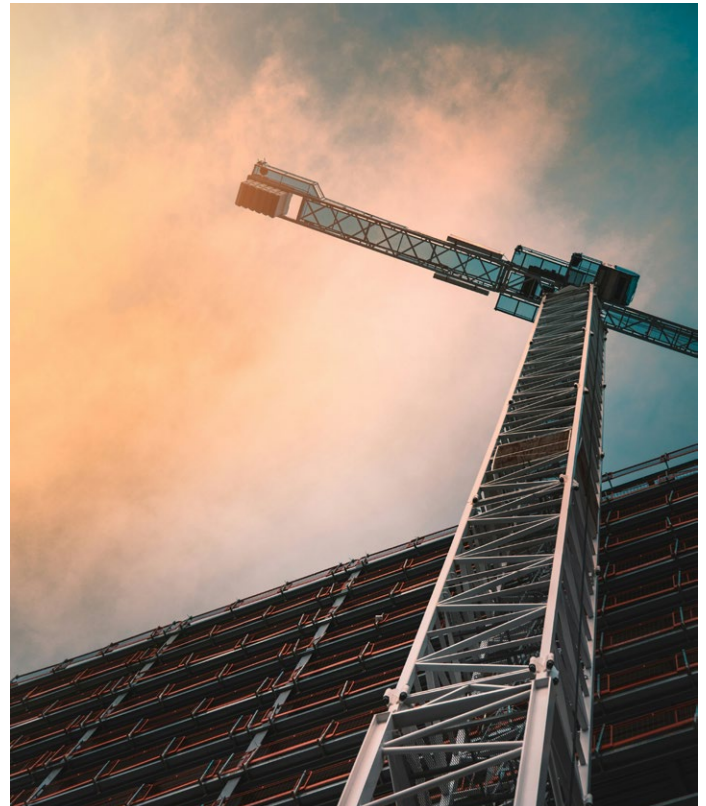
Project Phases and Timeline

2023: Initial Idea

The idea to take an innovative approach to this challenge was first explored by the Construction Association of New Brunswick and the New Brunswick Business Council. They then brought in the Canadian Home Builders' Association of New Brunswick. The industry partners worked with the Government of New Brunswick to collaborate on the creation of a Labour Force Adjustment Committee (LFAC). The LFAC fulfilled the role of the systems leaders for the 100-Day Challenge. Because of NouLAB's experience delivering the Economic Immigration Lab, which resulted in positive outcomes for a similar challenge (one related to internationally educated nurses), the services of the Pond-Deshpande Centre were sought. The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency also supported the work of the 100-Day Challenge.

LFAC comprised representatives from the following organizations:

- Construction Association of New Brunswick
- Construction Association of New Brunswick – Moncton Northeast
- Canadian Home Builders' Association of New Brunswick
- New Brunswick Multicultural Council
- New Brunswick Building Trades Unions

- New Brunswick Business Council
- Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour; Government of New Brunswick (Immigration NB, Working NB, Skilled Trades NB)
- Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Government of Canada

Discovery Phase Activities: November 2023–December 2023

The discovery phase, which ran from November to December 2023, served as the foundation for understanding the complex challenges within New Brunswick's construction sector and immigration landscape. Through collaboration with systems leaders and key stakeholders, we identified critical focus areas—recruitment, workplace readiness, and credential/skills recognition. This phase involved (1) recruiting and assembling diverse teams from industry, academia, government, and community, and (2) conducting extensive research and consultations. The PDC team gathered key insights from the GNB Skilled Trades International Recruitment Project, interviews with government bodies, and desktop research. PDC also facilitated a World Café at the joint industry andgovernment meeting led by the Construction Association of New Brunswick, where major themes such as language barriers, process clarity, leadership, retention, and inclusion emerged as essential areas for further exploration and action. These findings laid the groundwork for developing tailored strategies to address the needs of New Brunswick's construction workforce and ensure a more inclusive, effective approach to integrating newcomer talent into construction jobs.

A MORE DETAILED EXPLORATION OF THE DISCOVERY PHASE'S KEY ACTIVITIES IS OUTLINED BELOW:

ALIGNED OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES:
PDC held meetings with the systems leaders to align project objectives and strategies.
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DEFINED CHALLENGE FOCUS AREAS:
In collaboration with systems leaders, we identified the three key areas of focus to address during the challenge: recruitment, workplace readiness, and credential/skills recognition.

RECRUITED 100-DAY CHALLENGE TEAMS:
Assembled diverse, cross-sector teams from industry, academia, government, and community to participate in the challenge.

CONDUCTED DISCOVERY RESEARCH:
- **GNB Skilled Trades International Recruitment Project:** Explored insights from the Government of New Brunswick's recent workforce planning efforts for NB's skilled trades.
- **GNB Discovery Interviews:** Conducted interviews with key government bodies, including: Working NB, Immigration NB, Skilled Trades NB
- **Desktop Research:** Gathered existing knowledge and data to inform the project.
- **Jurisdictional Scanning:** Reviewed best practices and solutions from other regions as inspiration for local solutions.

- **Joint Industry and Government (JIG) World Café:** Several key themes emerged from a World Café we facilitated at the JIG meeting:

LANGUAGE: This was a prevalent theme, indicating an essential need to address communication barriers, including mutual understanding of trade-specific language.

PROCESS CLARITY: The conversation around the complexity of the immigration process indicates a need for more straightforward guidance for employers, on topics such as comprehending various immigration statuses and navigating through the available pathways.

LEADERSHIP: The discussions pointed to the influential role of leadership in fostering an environment that supports newcomer integration, emphasizing that strong leadership is integral to successful inclusion strategies.

RETENTION: Retention challenges were frequently mentioned, indicating the importance of developing strategies that not only attract
but also sustainably engage newcomer talent within the industry.

SAFETY CULTURE: The session highlighted the crucial need to bridge language and cultural gaps in safety practices. Ensuring that safety protocols are clearly communicated, understood and upheld across diverse teams is paramount for everyone's well-being.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION: The importance of building workplaces that truly embrace diversity and foster an inclusive atmosphere was a recurring theme, suggesting it's a priority for both policy and practice.

SKILLS AND TRAINING GAPS: Identifying the potential gaps between skills of newcomers and the industry's requirements was a focal point, underlining the need for tailored evaluation and training solutions.

FLEXIBILITY IN RECOGNITION PROCESS: Discussions emphasized the importance of a flexible approach in recognizing international qualifications and experiences, identifying individual backgrounds of newcomers, and staying away from a one-size-fits-all approach.

NEEDS VS. WANTS: The dialogue underscored the need to distinguish between the essential skills, experience, and number of workers required and the additional qualifications that are desirable but not necessary, aiming for a balance that doesn't hinder newcomer employment.

UNCONSCIOUS BIASES:

Unconscious biases, such as assumptions about newcomer abilities and job competition fears, influence hiring and can hinder newcomer integration. There is a need to clearly identify these biases to ensure they are addressed appropriately in order to foster hiring practices that truly value diversity and successfully integrate newcomers.

A Report on the
100-Day Challenge

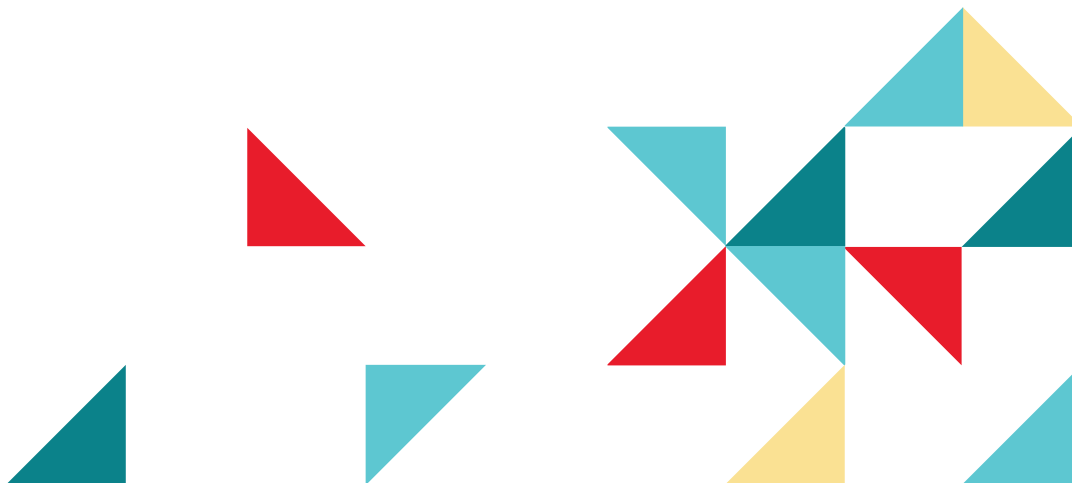POND DESHPANDE CENTRE at UNB | NouLAB

- **Onboarded a Facilitation Team:** PDC Brought together and prepared a skilled facilitation team to guide and support the challenge process.
  - › **Rebecca McSheffery,** Director of Innovation & NouLAB, Pond-Deshpande Centre
  - › **Katie Davey, Executive Director,** Pond-Deshpande Centre
  - › **Vanessa Paesani,** Director of Entrepreneurship & Advisory Services, Pond-Deshpande Centre
  - › **Vincent-Luc Brouillard,** Pond-Deshpande Centre Associate
  - › **Vanessa Currie,** Participatory Researcher, All In Research & Innovation Inc.
  - › **Madeleine Whalen,** Dwesign Researcher, All In Research & Innovation Inc.
  - › **Courtney Ivey,** Visual Designer, All In Research & Innovation Inc.

January 2024–April 2024: Implementation Phase

The implementation phase, which ran from January to April 2024, marked a significant shift from planning to action. During this phase, we assembled three dedicated teams to tackle key focus areas: recruitment, workplace readiness, and credential/skills recognition. These teams, made up of 30 participants from various sectors, worked collaboratively to explore solutions to the challenges identified during the discovery phase. Their work aimed to address both immediate needs and long-term strategies for successfully integrating newcomers into New Brunswick's construction workforce.

THREE TEAMS, THREE FOCUS AREAS:

✓ **Recruitment Team:** This team began by exploring how New Brunswick's construction sector could leverage immigration to address labour shortages. They focused on uncovering barriers and identifying what was needed to hire newcomers locally, nationally, and internationally to meet both immediate and future workforce needs.

✓ **Workplace Readiness Team:** This team concentrated on developing ways to prepare both workers and employers to welcome newcomers into the workforce. Their goal was to ensure successful integration and long-term retention by creating a supportive environment within New Brunswick's construction sector.

✓ **Credential and Skills Recognition Team:** Starting with the challenge of recognizing international qualifications, this team worked on ways to better validate and utilize the education, skills, and expertise of newcomers.

13 Immigration Pathways into the Construction Workforce
A Report on the 100-Day Challenge
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THIRTY PARTICIPANTS FORMED THESE THREE TEAMS:

Recruitment Team		
Team Leads	Sristi Panta	New Brunswick Multicultural Council
	Andrew Nelson	Homestead Bay Contracting Inc.
Team Members	Bronwyn Dunphy	Arsenault Bros. Construction Ltd.
	Jennifer Rietzel	Rietzel Landscaping
	Peter Wilson	Dowd Roofing Inc.
	Ryan Downe	Colpitts Developments Ltd.
	Michelle Gordon	Maple Leaf Homes Inc.
	Eric Thibodeau	Government of New Brunswick, Immigration NB
	Kristen Shaw	OSCO Construction Group

Workplace Readiness Team		
Team Leads	Terri Langdon	McCain Foods
	Leticia Leon De Gante	New Brunswick Multicultural Council
Team Members	Raphaela Queiroz	Avondale Construction Ltd.
	Jamie Pelletier-Bernier	FundyPros Specialty Construction
	Laurie Cole	New View Designs by Laurie Cole Inc.
	Hélène Savoie-Louis	MAP Strategic Workforce Services
	André Lang	Government of New Brunswick, Working NB
	George Itoafa	Government of New Brunswick, Working NB
	Kirby Rushton	New Brunswick Community College
	Shelley Poirier	NB Construction Safety Association
	Kevin Leger	Premiere Plumbing & Heating Ltd.

Credential/Skills Recognition Team		
Team Leads	Rob Reid	Government of New Brunswick, Apprenticeship and Occupational Certification
	Jamie Slipp	NB Roofing Contractors Association Inc.
Team Members	Brad McLaughlin	MCL Construction Ltd.
	Rob Campbell	New Brunswick Community College
	Alain Gauvin	Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick
	Rick Smith	New Brunswick Building Trades Unions
	Tom Taylor	E.T. Mechanical Ltd.
	Marion Rey	New Brunswick Multicultural Council

Launch Workshop: January 26, 2024, Wu Conference Centre, Fredericton, New Brunswick

Held at the Wu Conference Centre in Fredericton, New Brunswick, the launch workshop brought together the 30 participants from diverse sectors to form their teams around the three key focus areas identified by the systems leaders. Throughout the day, participants learned about systems change, explored the challenges facing the construction sector, and developed detailed action plans for the 100-Day Challenge.

Launch Workshop Objectives:

▶ Establish a shared understanding of the key challenges facing New Brunswick's construction sector.

▶ Define and commit to an ambitious and exciting 100-Day goal.

▶ Generate innovative ideas to achieve the goal and develop detailed action plans.

Participants were introduced to essential systems change methodologies and tools, including:

▶ **The tennis ball exercise** demonstrated teamwork, leadership, communication, and the complexity of systems change.

THE TENNIS BALL EXERCISE

- **Everyone must touch the ball,**
- **In the same order,**
- **One ball at a time,**

▶ The **systems transformation triangle** is a framework that helps participants understand the interconnected elements of systems change, including mindsets, processes, and structures.

SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION TRIANGLE

Increasing Leverage & Influence

STRUCTURAL CHANGE (EXPLICIT): Policy | Practices | Resource Flows

RELATIONAL CHANGE (SEMI-EXPLICIT): Relationships & connections | Power Dynamics

TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE (IMPLICIT): Mental Models

Source: The Waters of Systems Change.FSG
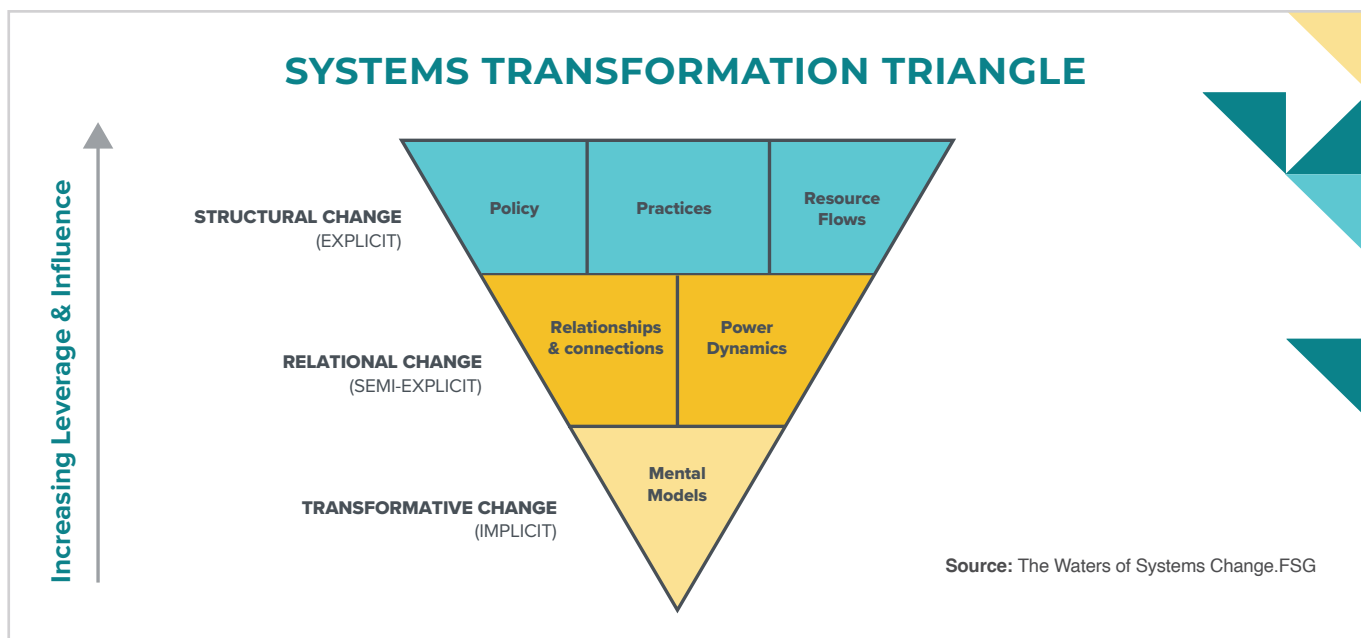
⬕ **Journey mapping** visually maps out the relationships and interactions within the system, identifying leverage points for change.

Example: mapping an recently hired immigrant's workplace integration journey in the NB construction Sector
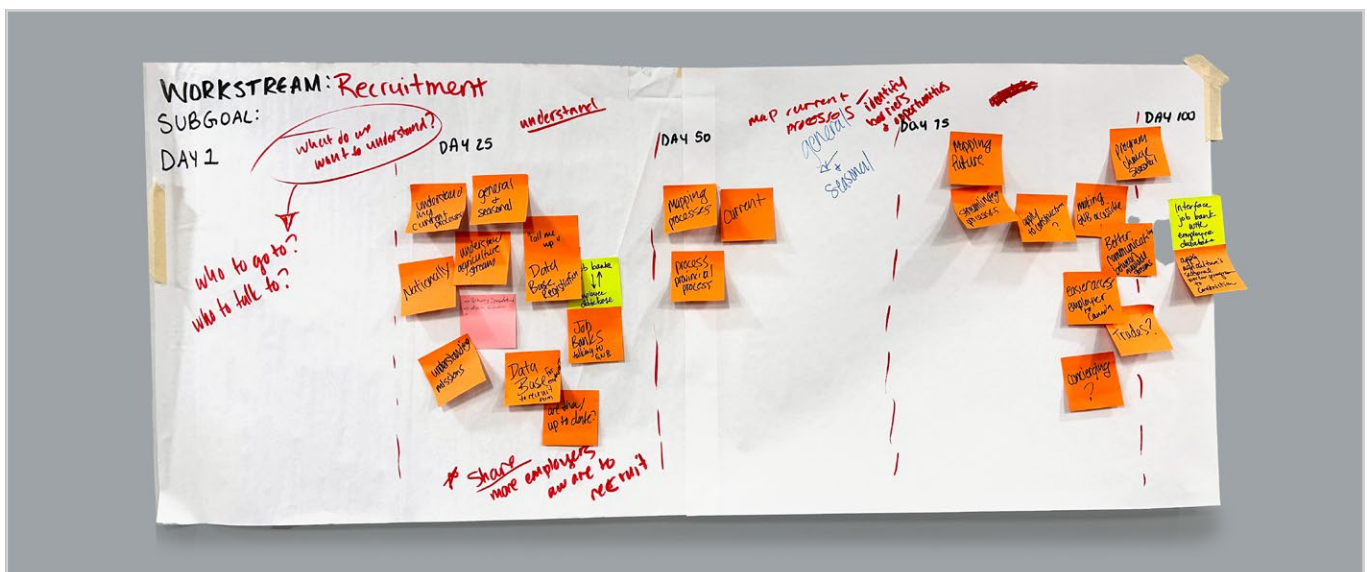
⬕ **Action planning** has participants brainstorm draft plans with intentional actions, responsibilities, and timelines to be achieved in 100 days.

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Midpoint Review: March 28, Virtual

At the halfway mark of our 100-Day Challenge, we held a dedicated workshop that brought all the teams back together to share and reflect on their progress, learn from their experiences, and make necessary adjustments for the remaining period.

Workshop Objectives

�> Review the last 50 days: where you were, where you are, and where you need to go from here.

▶ Identify major challenges, solutions, innovations, and improvements.

▶ Share team and personal stories—lessons, contributions, hopes.

▶ Update action plans.

Midpoint Survey

At the midpoint of the 100-Day Challenge, each participant was asked to share one word that best described their experience working with their team. The word cloud below represents the collective responses, highlighting a broad range of reflections. While words like "frustrating" and "controversial" surfaced, the positive descriptions—such as "encouraging," "determined," "collaborative," and "engaging"—clearly outnumbered the more fraught descriptions. This demonstrates the resilience and commitment of the teams, who remain focused on the long-term success of the project despite inevitable hurdles along the way.

> "The energy generated from the midpoint review came at the right time to keep us motivated."
>
> *Participant*

Day 75 Check-In: May 1, Virtual

After we heard how much teams appreciated the opportunity to gather and connect during the midpoint review, we added a check-in workshop on day 75. We delved into how the work of each team would impact the existing system and its users, including construction employers, newcomers, government bodies, settlement agencies, and training providers. This discussion emphasized the significance of our efforts in driving systemic change and highlighted the interconnectedness of our initiatives. This session provided another valuable opportunity for our teams to share their progress, plan their next steps, and discuss the broader impact of their work.

Feedback at the 75-Day Mark

The Day 75 Check-In provided an opportunity for teams to reflect on their progress, and the feedback from participants and systems leaders was overwhelmingly positive. Many noted how much they had learned from others' diverse perspectives. They highlighted the spirit of collaboration, and participants expressed appreciation for the open exchange of ideas and the unique platform the challenge provided.

SEVERAL KEY INSIGHTS EMERGED FROM THE FEEDBACK:

▼ Breaking down silos and centralizing information ensures the work doesn't stop at the 100 days.

▼ Impressive progress was made in a short time, which reinforced the potential for real, lasting change.

▼ The construction sector is complex and unique, and this process provided valuable insights into addressing labour gaps.

▼ Participants were optimistic about the solutions being developed and confident that concrete results will help the construction sector in NB find and retain skilled immigrant workers.

▼ Many participants emphasized the power of collaboration and were excited by the progress made when silos are eliminated, which allows for stronger partnerships between industry and other stakeholders.

This feedback reflected a shared sense of determination and belief that the work will continue to impact the sector well beyond the 100-Day Challenge.
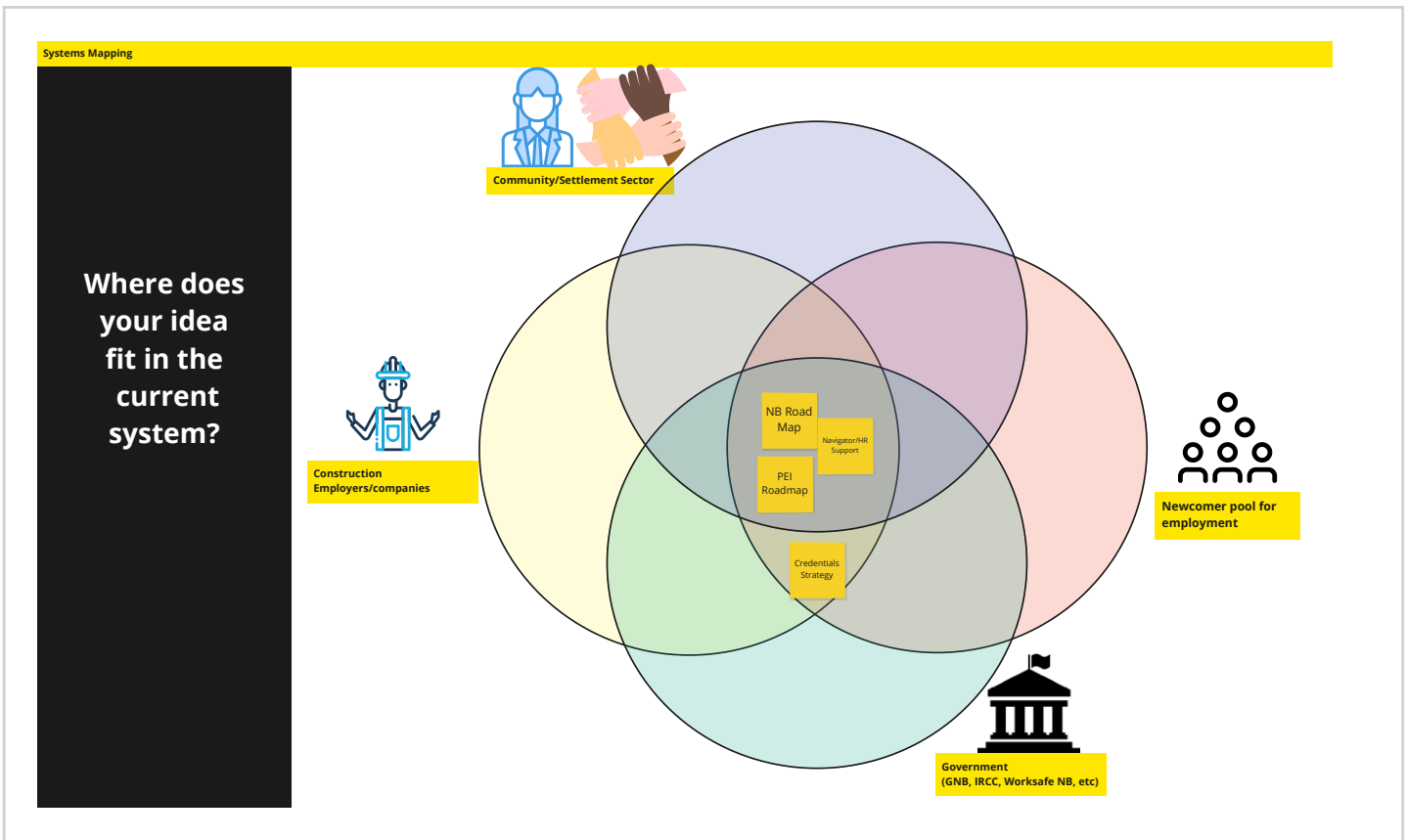

Figure 1: Mapping connections between ideas

Sustainability Workshop: May 16, 2024, Community Hub on Joyce, Moncton, New Brunswick

Teams gathered for the second and final in-person session for the sustainability workshop. The workshop began with team presentations showcasing accomplishments from the 100-Day Challenge and emphasizing the progress and innovations achieved. A key highlight was a talk by Justin Ryan from the New Brunswick Multicultural Council. He discussed the importance of intercultural competency and its crucial role in the success of hiring and retaining internationally trained workers. Participants discussed how to track success; create indicators for each prototype; and develop methods for data collection, analysis, and sharing. The session concluded with the drafting of sustainability plans and ideas for necessary system shifts to ensure the challenge's impact extends beyond the initial 100 days and continues to benefit New Brunswick's construction sector.

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES:

▶ Celebrate and acknowledge team achievements, innovations, and insights.

▶ Identify the most important innovations and new ways of working that emerged during the 100 days.

▶ Develop recommendations to sustain performance, expand impact, and continue to shift the system.

Feedback at Day 100

A Report on the 100-Day Challenge

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The sustainability workshop marked the conclusion of the implementation phase of the 100-Day Challenge. Participants shared their thoughts on the experience through a word-cloud activity, which captured a wide range of emotions and insights. The most prominent words included "informative," "inspiring," and "energizing," reflecting the overall positive impact of the workshop and the challenge itself.

Many participants found the process to be both challenging and rewarding, with the feedback emphasizing how educational and thought-provoking the journey had been. The words "relationships" and "collaborative groups" highlighted the strong connections formed during the challenge, while others such as "rollercoaster" reflect the ups and downs inherent in navigating complex systems change.

KEY TAKEAWAYS INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

Inspiration and energizing interactions underscore the importance of collaboration.

The experience was described as a "true eye-opener," as it provided deep insights into the complexities of the construction sector and the potential for systems change.

Participants felt grateful and proud of the progress they had made and were optimistic about the concrete solutions developed during the challenge.

Many participants commented on how informative the process was, which speaks to how much knowledge and learning they gained through the workshop.

This feedback underscores the belief that the work initiated during the 100-Day Challenge will have a lasting impact. Many expressed excitement about the future and the systemic changes they helped to put in motion.

Immigration Pathways into the
Construction Workforce

A Report on the
100-Day Challenge

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Blending the Learnings Together

Journey Map

We embarked on the 100-Day Challenge with a common objective: increasing the representation of immigrants in the construction sector to meet growing workforce needs. Guided by the Labour Force Adjustment Committee, we divided into three focused teams—recruitment, workplace readiness, and credential/skills recognition.

To develop solutions that would increase the number of immigrants working in the construction sector, the first and most crucial step was to understand the current reality. Our teams used various exercises and tools to gain a clear and collective understanding of the system—how it operates, who the users are, and the barriers and challenges users face when navigating it. This work also involved engaging with a variety of stakeholders, including government employees, industry experts, employers, and employees.

Supporting this work, teams conducted surveys, interviews, and extensive research, and they shared resources and expertise with each other. They collaborated in workshops and weekly meetings to advance their specific focus areas. To ensure connections between the teams, facilitators worked in the background, bringing team leads together as needed to explore collaborations and synergies.

TEAM "HOW MIGHT WE" STATEMENTS

RECRUITMENT TEAM: How might we bridge the information gap between employers and government?

WORKPLACE READINESS TEAM: How might we better connect employers to best practices and practical solutions to support their newcomer integration initiatives?

CREDENTIAL AND SKILLS RECOGNITION TEAM: How might we build consistent measurement processes to measure people's skills that could be replicated across occupations?

Despite working in separate teams, each group was able to recognize how their efforts improved the hiring experience for both immigrants and employers. However, each team's primary focus was on enhancing the experience for employers. This common user focus across the teams highlighted a major "aha!" moment: employers are the key lever for success, as their decisions and actions ultimately shape and impact the entire hiring process.

The teams centred their efforts on understanding and improving the hiring experiences of construction employers across the province, whether small or large, residential or commercial. Through this process, several key challenges and barriers faced by employers were uncovered.

▌ **Limited Resources:** Employers lack the time, expertise, and resources needed to effectively hire, onboard, and integrate immigrant employees.

▌ **Screening:** Employers struggle to understand how a candidate's skills and international education translate to Canadian standards, often leading to qualified immigrant candidates being screened out.

▌ **Lack of Clarity:** Employers are uncertain about where to start, whom to reach out to, what programs and services are available, and what questions they should ask. The complex immigration system, with its many players and unclear responsibilities, makes it difficult for employers to identify the right contacts and supports for their specific hiring needs.

▌ **Specialized HR Skill Set Required:** Hiring immigrants is new to many construction companies. It requires a niche skill set that existing human resources (HR) professionals tend to develop without formal training or support.

▌ **Communication and Safety:** Employers are concerned about language barriers and feel unequipped to support employees with limited English proficiency, fearing these barriers could pose safety risks.

▌ **Government and Industry Disconnect:** Employers perceive a lack of communication and support from the provincial government. They feel that the current immigration system and supports do not meet their needs or recognize the unique aspects of the construction sector.

▌ **Workplace Culture:** Employers are worried that their organizational culture may not be welcoming to diverse workers, and are uncertain about how their existing teams will react.

These barriers ultimately lead to a lack of employer confidence in making informed decisions about hiring, onboarding, training, and integrating immigrant candidates and employees. For the construction sector to successfully hire more immigrants into vacancies, employers need the capacity and information to take action and make informed hiring decisions.

Prototypes:

With a refined focus on employers and a clear understanding of the key barriers and challenges blocking employers from hiring immigrants, the new and final "how might we" statement that emerged connected all three areas of focus:

How might we ensure **construction employers are confident** in hiring, onboarding, training, and integrating immigrant candidates/employees by **increasing human resources capacity** across the sector and **providing clear, transparent, and accessible information?**

To address this, we recommend the following:

1 Increase human resources capacity across the sector.

2 Ensure access to clear and transparent information.

The teams developed seven prototypes to fulfill these recommendations. The following sections offer a detailed look at each prototype and how it supports the recommendations. These prototypes lay the groundwork for employers to hire immigrants into construction roles.

Recommendation 1: Increase Human Resources Capacity Across the Sector

A critical barrier identified through this project is that HR capacity in the construction sector is limited, which hampers employers' abilities to effectively recruit, onboard, and retain immigrant employees. Increasing HR capacity is vital to supporting employers as they navigate the complexities of hiring and managing a diverse workforce.

Prototype A: Shared HR Support Role

The recruitment team prototyped the idea of an external HR professional role, offering services accessible to anyone in New Brunswick's construction sector. Employers could access these services online, by phone, or in person to receive tailored support in recruiting and retaining immigrant candidates. This new shared HR support role would track hiring needs, develop customized hiring plans, and provide execution support based on each employer's capacity and specific requirements. This new shared HR support role is designed to bridge the gap between employers' hiring needs and their capacity to effectively recruit and retain immigrant candidates.

To test the concept of the shared HR support role, the team developed a website as a prototype. The website simulates the experience an employer might have when engaging with the HR support role. The website serves as an interactive platform where employers can explore the potential services offered by this role, understand what the role could look like, and see the impact it could have on the construction sector. This prototype allowed us to gather feedback and insights from employers, helping us refine the concept before moving forward.

You can view the prototype website here.

CANB NAVIGATOR & HR SUPPORT

BUILDING A CONSTRUCTION WORKFORCE THAT'S DIVERSE, SAFETY-FOCUSED, AND HIGHLY SKILLED.

500+
Employers Engaged

1000+
Jobs Filled

2000+
Newcomers Looking for Work

Our CANB Navigator role is a trusted source of human resources insight, programs, and tools to help the New Brunswick construction industry.

Our Navigator role works to strengthen the ability of the New Brunswick construction sector to meet current and future needs of its workforce by leveraging the diverse skills and experience of immigrant talent.

HOW A CANB NAVIGATOR CAN HELP:

Working hand-in-hand every step of the way, we act as your Navigator and HR Support expert, guiding employers through the complexities of hiring and integrating diverse talent.

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POND DESHPANDE CENTRE at UNB | NouLAB

- **Expertise is Reassuring:** Employers find it reassuring to delegate recruitment tasks to an expert with a unique blend of experience in HR, immigration, and construction.

- **Role Must Be** Central and Industry-Led: Employers emphasized that this role needs to be central and industry-owned to enable strategic hiring across the sector.

- **Employers Want Active Support:** It's not just about having the right information; employers need help building immigrant hiring into their operations. Primary support should be around sourcing candidates and managing the overall recruitment process to fill vacancies.

Prototype B: HR Community of Practice

The idea for this prototype emerged as a real light bulb moment during testing of the shared HR support role. As we engaged with small and large employers, including those with established HR departments and those without, it became clear that regardless of the HR resources available, all employers were struggling with the complexities of recruiting, onboarding, and retaining immigrant employees. This insight sparked the idea of creating a structured learning model specifically for construction HR professionals. We introduced this concept in testing to gather feedback, and it quickly became clear that a formal training model could fill a critical knowledge and skill gap in the sector, helping HR teams navigate the challenges of immigration more effectively.

HR Community of Practice: We recommend launching a virtual, monthly community of practice for HR staff working in the construction sector. A community of practice is a group of individuals who share a common interest or profession and come together to learn from one another, share experiences, and collaborate on challenges. This platform would provide HR staff with an ongoing space for learning, exchanging insights, and working together to develop and implement best practices in recruiting and retaining immigrant talent.

WHAT WE HEARD FROM EMPLOYERS

DURING TESTING

- **Struggles Despite HR Staff:** Companies with HR staff still struggle with the complexities of hiring immigrant employees.

- **Learning on the Go:** There is no official training or approach for sharing learnings, which leads HR professionals to have to learn on the go.

Through testing, we identified that a community of practice could provide valuable support for HR professionals to learn about

- the requirements, process, and types of **work permits** available;

- strategies to manage and overcome **language barriers** in the workplace; and

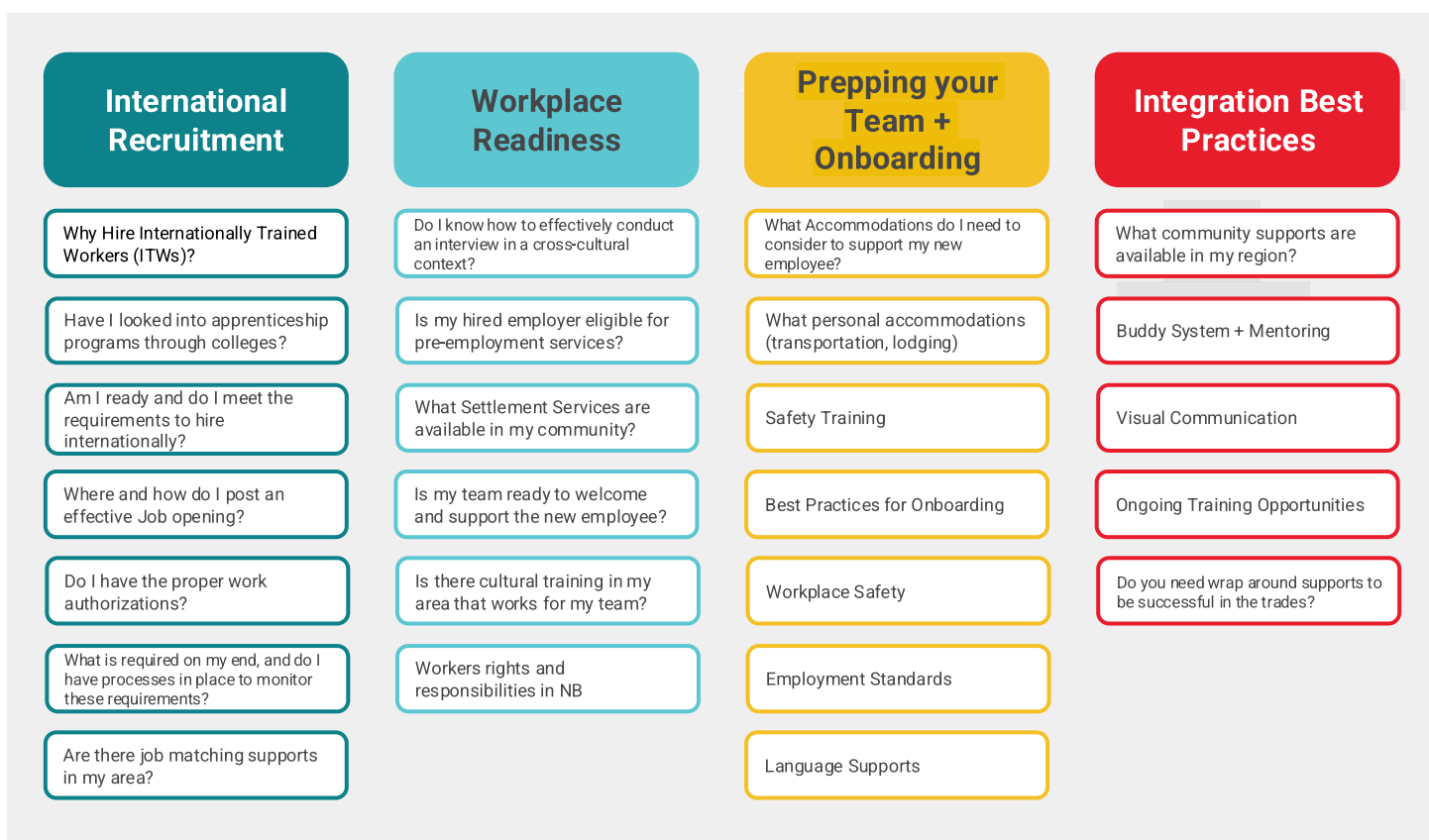- the different **immigration pathways** and how they relate to employment opportunities.

Employers in the construction sector often struggle with a lack of clear and transparent information on both immigration processes and the skills and credentials of international candidates. These gaps make it difficult to navigate not only the immigration hiring pathways but also the recognition of foreign qualifications, leaving employers uncertain about immigrant workers' potential.

This recommendation emphasizes the importance of providing employers with comprehensive, accessible, and reliable information on both immigration pathways and the skills/credentials of potential immigrant candidates. By ensuring transparency and clarity in these areas, employers will be better equipped to recruit, onboard, and retain skilled immigrant employees, helping to address labour shortages and build a more inclusive workforce.
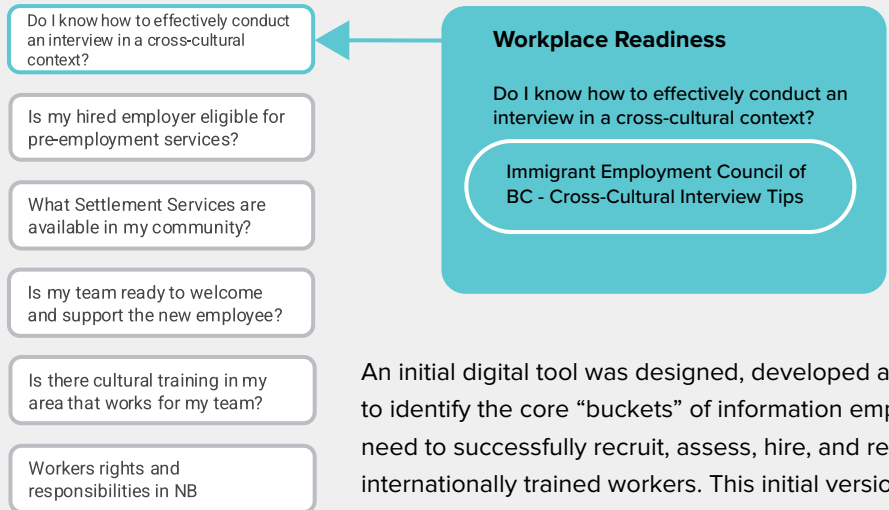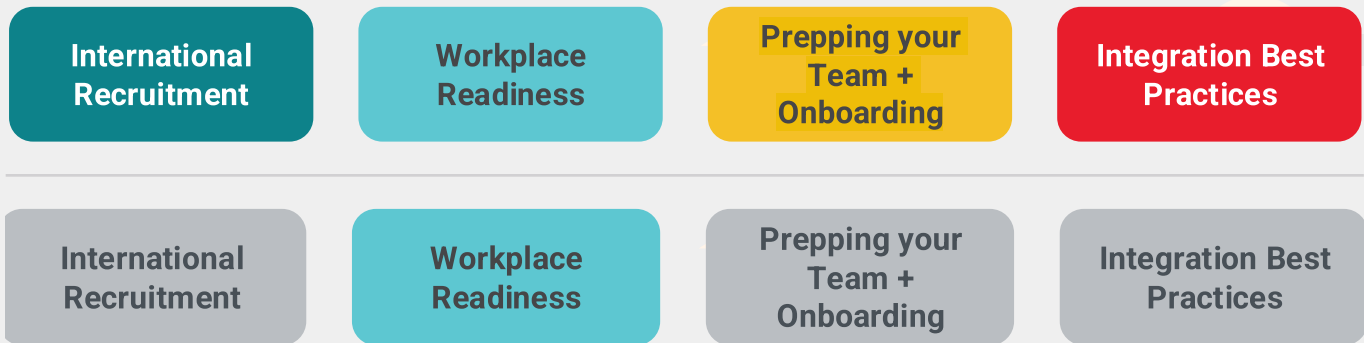
Prototype C: Employers' Road Map

Employers expressed feeling overwhelmed by the abundance of resources available for recruiting and retaining newcomers. Navigating multiple sources to determine the best approach can be time-consuming and confusing, particularly for busy employers who lack the time to sift through complex information. To combat this, we formed a centralized digital tool kit that would consolidate all essential information in one easy-to-use, interactive platform. By simplifying access to key resources, employers could more effectively engage with the recruitment process and make informed decisions without the burden of searching through various sources.

International Recruitment	Workplace Readiness	Prepping your Team + Onboarding	Integration Best Practices
Why Hire Internationally Trained Workers (ITWs)?	Do I know how to effectively conduct an interview in a cross-cultural context?	What Accommodations do I need to consider to support my new employee?	What community supports are available in my region?
Have I looked into apprenticeship programs through colleges?	Is my hired employer eligible for pre-employment services?	What personal accommodations (transportation, lodging)	Buddy System + Mentoring
Am I ready and do I meet the requirements to hire internationally?	What Settlement Services are available in my community?	Safety Training	Visual Communication
Where and how do I post an effective Job opening?	Is my team ready to welcome and support the new employee?	Best Practices for Onboarding	Ongoing Training Opportunities
Do I have the proper work authorizations?	Is there cultural training in my area that works for my team?	Workplace Safety	Do you need wrap around supports to be successful in the trades?
What is required on my end, and do I have processes in place to monitor these requirements?	Workers rights and responsibilities in NB	Employment Standards	
Are there job matching supports in my area?		Language Supports	

ROAD MAP TO ATTRACTING AND RETAINING NEWCOMER TALENT

Hiring a newcomer is a complex task. There are so many different immigration streams and everyone's immigration journey is different. This road map was made to specifically help employers by suggesting ways to navigate the process, inform them about best practices and what is already available, and help them see upcoming steps for a successful integration and better retention efforts.

International Recruitment	Workplace Readiness	Prepping your Team + Onboarding	Integration Best Practices

International Recruitment	Workplace Readiness	Prepping your Team + Onboarding	Integration Best Practices

Do I know how to effectively conduct an interview in a cross-cultural context?

Is my hired employer eligible for pre-employment services?

What Settlement Services are available in my community?

Is my team ready to welcome and support the new employee?

Is there cultural training in my area that works for my team?

Workers rights and responsibilities in NB

Workplace Readiness

Do I know how to effectively conduct an interview in a cross-cultural context?

Immigrant Employment Council of BC - Cross-Cultural Interview Tips

An initial digital tool was designed, developed and tested to identify the core "buckets" of information employers need to successfully recruit, assess, hire, and retain internationally trained workers. This initial version was designed to provide a clear and user-friendly experience to help employers navigate the complex process of hiring and onboarding newcomers.

The buckets tested in this prototype included

▸ **international recruitment**

▸ **workplace readiness**

▸ **prepping your team and onboarding**

▸ **integration best practices**

The digital tool focused on simplifying the process for employers by making the platform interactive and easy to navigate. Future plans involve further development of both content and design, based on feedback from employers, to ensure that the tool will evolve to meet sector needs.

WHAT WE HEARD FROM EMPLOYERS DURING TESTING

▌ **Accessible, Simplified Information:** Information should be presented in an easy-to-understand format.

▌ **Industry-Led/Hosted:** The road map should be led by the industry and hosted by the Construction Association of New Brunswick to ensure relevance and trustworthiness.

▌ **Tool and HR Support:** This tool shouldn't exist alone. For a holistic approach, the road map should be paired with the HR support role (prototype A) to provide the human connection needed to ensure the tool is leveraged by employers and stays up to date.

▌ **Visual Process:** The tool should feature visual aids, like road maps and checklists, to make it user-friendly and not text-heavy.

▌ **Resources for Supporting Newcomer Employees:** Employers highlighted the need for resources specifically designed for newcomer employees themselves, to support their integration journey and help them successfully adapt to the workplace.

Prototype D: Pre-Assessments

Employers expressed a need to have more information about the skills of international candidates and a way to assess how those skills might translate to Canadian standards before making job offers. In response, the credential/skills recognition team worked with Skilled Trades NB to develop pre-assessments which are now hosted on the FAST NB platform.

These self-assessments are conducted online by the candidates and are aligned with the curriculum standards of the New Brunswick's apprenticeship program for designated occupations and follow National and Atlantic harmonization guidelines. They are structured similarly to the assessments used in apprenticeship-level training to ensure relevance and rigour in evaluating candidates' skills.

The assessments consist of two components:

▌ **Theoretical Assessment:** This part evaluates "what they know," focusing on the candidate's understanding of theoretical concepts relevant to their trade.

▌ **Practical Assessment:** This section tests "what they can do," evaluating the hands-on skills and abilities that the candidate can apply in the workplace.

The results from both self-assessments are shared with employers, providing them with valuable insights to support their international recruitment decisions. By offering a clear picture of candidates' skills, these pre-assessments help employers make informed decisions and reduce uncertainty in the hiring process.

BENEFITS

▼ **Increased Employer Confidence:** Pre-assessments provide employers with a clearer understanding of a candidate's skills, which boosts the employer's confidence in making hiring decisions.

▼ **Screening Tool:** These assessments serve as a useful tool to screen candidates more effectively.

▼ **Stronger Referrals:** If recruitment agencies (including immigrant consultants, Immigration NB, and the settlement sector) were granted access, they could make stronger candidate referrals based on assessment results.

▼ **Tailored Onboarding and Training:** The insights gained from these assessments could help employers design more targeted onboarding and training programs based on identified skills and knowledge gaps.

▼ **Faster Hiring Process:** Having a detailed understanding of candidate skills up front would speed up the recruitment process.

CHALLENGES

▼ **Employer Trust:** If not executed properly, employers could lose faith in the assessment process.

▼ **Self-Assessment Reliability:** The accuracy of candidates' self-assessments relies heavily on their honesty.

▼ **Adoption Challenges:** Encouraging widespread adoption of the tool among employers may be difficult.

▼ **Diverse Needs:** Crafting assessments that deliver meaningful results across a variety of occupations may prove difficult.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

▼ **Linking to Previous Employment:** Tying the assessment results to a candidate's previous employment history could provide additional context and reassurance to employers.

Prototype E: Policy Change for Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition

At present, employers must register someone into an apprenticeship before discovering whether the apprentice's prior theoretical training will be recognized. This creates risk and uncertainty for both employers and potential employees during the hiring process.

Currently, the Government of New Brunswick's Skilled Trades NB uses the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) process to evaluate registered apprentices who have prior education. PLAR reviews documents such as official transcripts and curriculum content to determine if they align with local standards. If a match is found, candidates may receive theory credits or challenge the corresponding apprenticeship level examination.

However, a key limitation of this process is that it occurs after the individual has arrived in Canada and secured employment, and the employer has registered them as an apprentice. This creates two major challenges:

▼ **For Candidates:** They are unsure of what credits they may receive when deciding which province to immigrate to.

▼ **For Employers:** They lack clarity on how much apprenticeship training a candidate will need before being fully credentialed and ready to work on the job site.

To address these challenges, the team recommended that Skilled Trades NB update the PLAR policy to allow individuals to submit a PLAR request before securing employment.

BENEFITS

▼ **Streamlined Process:** Removing unnecessary steps would simplify the hiring and apprenticeship registration process for both employers and candidates.

▼ **Increased Safety:** Offering jobs to employees for roles that align with their verified training would ensure they are adequately prepared for the job, thereby reducing the risk of accidents or safety issues on the job site.

▼ **Recognition of International Training:** This change would provide an opportunity to better recognize international training and experience, making New Brunswick more attractive to skilled immigrants.

▼ **Faster Credential Recognition:** Speeding up the skills recognition process would allow for quicker integration into the workforce.

CHALLENGES

▼ **Application Volume:** Skilled Trades NB would need to allocate more resources to process an increased number of applications.

▼ **Assessment Time:** Completing out-of-country assessments could take significant time, which would slow down the process if not properly managed.

▼ **Provincial Reciprocity:** Consultation with other provinces would be necessary to ensure mutual recognition of PLAR results to avoid issues if candidates were to relocate to different provinces.

▼ **Dual System:** A dual system may be necessary to ensure that both registered apprentices and non-registered individuals are served efficiently. This system would prioritize timely results for registered apprentices, while also allowing non-registered individuals to undergo Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) evaluations without delaying either group's progress. This ensures that apprentices continue their training without interruption, while others can still have their skills and qualifications assessed.

Prototype F: Employer Skills Gap Assessment

Employers reported that many immigrant workers arrive with substantial experience and practical skills, but because they lack formal theoretical training, they are unable to successfully complete the PLAR process. To address this gap, the credential/skills recognition team recommended that a practical skills assessment tool be developed. This tool would allow employers to assess an individual's practical abilities in a structured way, directly comparing them to the standards of apprenticeship training.

The goal of this tool would be to empower employers to evaluate workers on the job site and determine each worker's appropriate level in the apprenticeship program. Employers would be able to assess whether an employee is qualified at level one, two, three, or four, based on the skills demonstrated.

The tool would need to include a detailed rubric and suggested projects that employers could use to assess employees in real work environments. This would enable employers to move individuals through apprenticeship levels without unnecessary additional assessments, ensuring the process is streamlined while maintaining rigour.

BENEFITS

▼ **Structured Rubric:** Employers would have a clear, structured rubric to assess workers' practical skills directly on job sites.

▼ **Better Training Support:** Understanding the gaps in an employee's skills would allow employers to better support the employee's training and development needs.

▼ **Beyond Apprenticeship:** The tool could be applied beyond apprenticeship enrollment, helping employers assess the skills of all new employees and offering insights into internal training opportunities for non-trade roles.

▼ **Showcasing Skills:** Newcomer employees would have the opportunity to demonstrate their skills, helping them advance in their careers based on real-world performance.

CHALLENGES

▼ **Increased Workload for Employers:** The assessment process could add to employers' already full plates, creating additional administrative tasks.

▼ **Assessment Specificity:** The tool may not be specific enough to accurately determine which apprenticeship level a worker should be placed in.

▼ **Risk of Incorrect Placement:** There is a risk that employees might be pushed through to the wrong apprenticeship level, which could hinder their development.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

▼ **Collaboration:** Working with industry leaders and provincial and national organizations will be key to defining the required skills and qualifications.

▼ **Alternative Approaches:** Offering refresher courses for immigrant employees to familiarize them with Canadian and New Brunswick-specific standards could be another option to help bridge gaps.

▼ **International Best Practices:** Looking at other international or national examples, such as Skills Canada competitions, may provide valuable insights into setting standards for assessments.

▼ **Assessment Oversight:** Rather than employers conducting assessments alone, it might be beneficial for a committee or group to oversee the process to ensure objectivity and fairness.

Prototype G: Credential Recognition for Institutions Outside of Canada

Employers identified a significant challenge in the fact that currently STNB only has standardized transfer credits for training institutions in NB and does not recognize any institutions outside of Canada. This means that all internationally trained workers are required to submit a PLAR application, regardless of where they obtained their previous training or credentials. In response, the recommendation is to establish international credential recognition agreements with specific institutions in target countries, which would eliminate the need for PLAR applications in many cases."

To address this, Skilled Trades NB piloted a credential recognition program with a leading vocational training center in Brazil that specializes in education for skilled trades. The institution provides practical, hands-on training in skilled trades, making it a key partner for aligning international trade skills with Canadian standards. Skilled Trades NB program development staff conducted a thorough review of the programs and have conducted a comparative analysis between New Brunswick's apprenticeship training programs and their offerings.

Skilled Trades NB's goal is to establish a process where graduates from recognized international institutions, automatically receive credits toward their apprenticeship. This simplifies the hiring and training process for employers and provides a more streamlined pathway for internationally trained workers to enter the workforce in New Brunswick.

Work is ongoing to determine the exact credits that would be available for graduates of these institutions and to establish a reliable system for validating the credentials provided in apprenticeship applications. Once the pilot is completed with SENAI, the program will be expanded to other countries where viable markets exist for skilled international labour.

WHAT WE HEARD FROM EMPLOYERS DURING TESTING

BENEFITS

▶ **Eliminates Redundant Training:** This process avoids requiring newcomers to redo their qualifications and training, thereby helping them enter the workforce faster.

▶ **Global Skill Understanding:** It enhances employers' understanding of the skills taught in international institutions, giving them greater insight into the types of employees they are hiring.

▶ **International Recruitment Game-Changer:** This initiative is a game-changer for recruiting internationally, as it provides a more reliable and efficient system for bringing in skilled workers.

▶ **Expands Skilled Workforce Pool:** This initiative increases the pool of skilled workers available to fill construction vacancies in New Brunswick.

▶ **Employer Confidence:** This initiative boosts employer confidence in the hiring process by validating the credentials of international workers.

CHALLENGES

▶ **Matching Standards:** One of the major challenges will be finding international institutions whose standards and requirements align with the high standards set by Canadian apprenticeship programs.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

▶ **Gap Analysis and Bridging Programs:** Learnings from this pilot should be used to identify any gaps between international training programs and local requirements. This gap analysis could lead to the development of bridging training programs that would close those gaps and ensure full compliance with Canadian standards.

A Report on the 100-Day Challenge

POND DESHPANDE CENTRE | NouLAB

As the 100-Day Challenge drew to a close, the teams transitioned from development to the next crucial step: handing back the prototypes to systems leaders for implementation. These prototypes, which built on ideas through testing and collaboration, were designed to meet the immediate and long-term needs of the construction sector, with a focus on integrating immigrant talent into the workforce. By delivering these solutions to key systems leaders—including government and industry associations—we aim to embed the innovations into existing frameworks to ensure their sustained impact. Now, the responsibility lies with these leaders to further refine and implement the insights and tools developed during the challenge, driving the sector toward a more inclusive and prepared future. The feedback and data collected offer a strong foundation to support their ongoing efforts in building capacity, improving HR processes, and fostering meaningful change across the sector.

Conclusion

The 100-Day Challenge focused on immigration pathways into New Brunswick's construction workforce was a transformative journey for all involved. It provided a platform for key stakeholders from government, industry, and community sectors to collaboratively address pressing labour shortages and systemic barriers preventing immigrants from entering and thriving in the construction sector. Through this challenge, diverse teams identified critical issues, developed innovative solutions, and tested new prototypes that directly address the needs of both employers and immigrant workers.

The development of seven unique prototypes—including the shared HR support role, the immigration training & learning model for HR, and credential recognition for international institutions—demonstrates the sector's readiness to evolve. These solutions aim to increase HR capacity, provide clear and transparent information, and streamline processes to make it easier for employers to hire, onboard, and retain skilled immigrant workers. The feedback from participants and stakeholders throughout the process has been overwhelmingly positive, highlighting the sector's enthusiasm and commitment to making real, lasting change.

While the 100 days have come to an end, the work is far from over. The recommendations made and the prototypes developed offer a solid foundation for the future of the construction sector in New Brunswick. Now it is up to systems leaders and stakeholders to continue building on this momentum, scaling the solutions, and embedding the insights gained throughout the challenge. By doing so, we can ensure that New Brunswick's construction sector will be better equipped to meet the growing demands of the province while also providing meaningful employment opportunities for immigrants.

Together, we have taken important steps toward creating a more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable workforce. The journey doesn't end here. With continued collaboration, innovation, and dedication, the solutions born from this challenge have the potential to reshape the future of the construction industry in New Brunswick, supporting both economic growth and community well-being.

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