

Pathway for Systems Change in SETT Through Collaboration

Alicia D. Bjarnason PGeol., FGC, MA, CCIP™

Canadian Coalition of Women in Engineering Science Trades and Technology (CCWESTT)

Summary

For over 30 years, the Canadian Coalition of Women in Engineering, Science, Trades and Technology (CCWESTT) has been a voluntary, not-for-profit national coalition of individual members and groups from across the country who advocate for a diverse and inclusive Canadian Science, Engineering, Trades and Technology (SETT) workforce. Collectively supporting a network of over 500,000, CCWESTT builds alliances and partnerships, acts as a resource hub, and advocates with a strong, unified voice.

In 2024, CCWESTT received funding through the Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE) Women's Economic and Leadership Opportunities Fund, created to support the scaling of successful systemic change projects to expand reach and impact. This funding has allowed CCWESTT to extend the work of their recent project funded by the WAGE Feminist Response and Recovery Fund to address gaps and barriers to women and gender diverse people's economic security and prosperity. The knowledge gained from past CCWESTT Systemic Change Events, the CCWESTT online Resource Hub, and the CCWESTT Gap Analysis Report will be scaled to populations both inside and outside the SETT community. Scaling these efforts will create a central resource on the Canadian status of gender equality in SETT. Project objectives are designed to inspire the SETT community to advocate for systemic change at the company, organization, and legislative levels. This will be achieved by:

1. Expanding community and connectedness: Host Systemic Change Forums for the SETT community (virtual/in-person).
2. Reporting the data: Create a Gender Equality Report Card on SETT working environments by Federal, Provincial, and territorial jurisdictions.
3. Changing the narrative: Launch a Gender Equality in SETT Advocacy Campaign. CCWESTT partners will use this report card in an advocacy campaign to reach strategic and influential connections in industry, government, and beyond.

This project's scaling is designed to change the narrative around workplace culture and, through facts and data, show that gender equality does not exist in SETT workplaces across Canada. It will open the way for a national conversation about equitable change.

This presentation will explain where this project is to date and what the next steps will be.

Theory / Method / Workflow

The *CCWESTT Changing the Narrative: An Advocacy Pathway for Systemic Change in SETT* project has been designed using a collaborative systems change approach. In December 2024, CCWESTT kicked the project off by inviting the greater SETT community to participate through a Request for Tender (RFT) and a Request for Knowledge (RFK). The RFT's primary purpose was to seek policy analysis and research support to learn about current structures/policies within Canadian jurisdictions that create barriers within SETT working environments. The RFK request was an opportunity to ensure that this scaling project included a scaling deep aspect and to learn how jurisdictional structures/policies create barriers within SETT working environments from an

intersectional lens. The objective was to compare and contrast jurisdictions to identify leading practices and gaps in public policy.

CCWESTT pairs this collaboration with Systemic Change Forums (virtually and in person) to expand the collective understanding of effectively doing systems change work through scaling deep, scaling out, and scaling up. These events will also help create a sense of community and increase the advocacy network. The first forum was held in Calgary, Alberta, on February 27, 2025. CCWESTT invited the Tamarack Institute to lead the participants through a workshop. The next event will be a two-day event held in Montreal in the Fall of 2025. CCWESTT will invite the community to SETT gather again in Calgary in May 2026 for the 21st CCWESTT four-day biennial conference.

Through these collaborative efforts, CCWESTT will create a Gender Equality Report Card that can be used by the greater SETT community to help identify legislative gaps within the jurisdictional level and address current barriers within SETT working environments that limit economic and professional success for SETT workers and SETT companies. The report card will be launched in the fall of 2025. By understanding the existing gaps, the SETT community can collectively advocate for a national conversation about equitable change.

Acknowledgements

Project funder - Women and Gender Equality Canada

Thank you to the CCWESTT Systemic Change Team and the Collaborative Partners

References

Parahoo, R., Douglas, B., Bjarnason, A., Hewlett, L., & Dyson, J. (2023). Gap Analysis Report – Gender Inclusion in SETT: Effective Strategies for Systemic Change. [Gap Analysis Report – CCWESTT](#)

CCWESTT Resource Hub: <https://ccwestt-ccfsimt.org/resource-hub/>