

Small software developers to benefit from improved international standards

Canada is playing a key role in international efforts to make software engineering standards more relevant and easier to apply for the more than three-quarters of software development businesses worldwide operating with 25 or fewer employees.

Leading this initiative is the ISO/IEC JTC 1¹ subcommittee on software and systems engineering, which is chaired by Canadian François Coallier. The subcommittee has created a working group to develop standardized profiles, templates and guides to help very small businesses to benefit from the ISO/IEC software engineering standards.

"By enabling small businesses to use international standards in software and systems engineering, the

working group's contributions will not only significantly expand the reach of these standards, but also enable small businesses to benefit from efficiently-proven engineering techniques and increase their participation in the global software and systems engineering markets," says Coallier.

The working group's efforts are based on the results of a 2005 survey of small software companies from more than 30 different countries. The survey confirmed that existing standards are difficult for smaller businesses to apply within their organizations. Respondents said that while they saw the value of conforming to international software standards, they lacked the human resources, time or money necessary to do so.

Fellow Canadian Claude Y. Laporte, a colleague of Coallier's at the *École de technologie supérieure* in Montréal, where both are software engineering professors, is serving the important role of editor for the suite of documents that will be produced by the working group.

"This project should help hundreds of Canadian software companies in developing their software better, faster and cheaper. And they have to. Otherwise, competitors will capture their markets," says Laporte. ■

¹ ISO/IEC JTC 1 stands for the International Organization for Standardization/ International Electrotechnical Commission Joint Technical Committee

For more information about the working group, visit: <http://profs.logti.etsmtl.ca/claporte/English/VSE/index.html>

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