CRI
Centre for Regulatory Innovation

Regulators' Capacity Fund

Using Conformity Assessment to Test AI

Standards Council of Canada (SCC) and Innovation, Science, and Economic Development (ISED)

28 October 2020 – 31 March 2021

$80,000

Conformity assessment is the practice of determining whether a product, service or system meets the requirements of a particular standard. Accreditation is formal, third-party recognition that an organization is competent to perform specific tasks, such as the certification of AI management systems. This project is part of a three-phase activity to develop an accreditation and conformity assessment program for artificial intelligence (AI) in Canada. The use of accreditation and conformity assessment for AI is new but growing. It has the potential to optimize assessment and support the AI industry.

Canada has identified that a conformity assessment program for AI products and services is required as delays in addressing this gap could potentially undermine Canada's interest and efforts in securing leadership in the AI and big data international standardization space. Furthermore, accredited third-party conformity assessment programs are useful tools for regulators when implementing flexible and anticipatory regulatory systems because consensus standards, upon which the conformity assessment is built, are continuously updated by technical experts, academics, and regulators all engaged in the standards maintenance process.

SCC partnered with federal regulators, Conformity Assessment Bodies, and small-to-medium-enterprise Canadian AI developers to develop a process for regulators to give input regarding requirements for the conformity assessment of AI management systems. A prototype accreditation program was created and will be developed further through experimentation in the coming years.

The launch of the prototype program will allow regulators to test whether using AI to run conformity assessments is effective for their needs and provide the opportunity for regulators to give feedback on their experiences so that it can be adjusted accordingly.