

LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION

From Recession to Recovery: Environmental Jobs and Hiring Trends in the Decade Ahead

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eco.ca

The environmental job market in Canada was on a definite upward trend in 2020—until a pandemic disrupted pretty much all aspects of daily life. General employment was considerably impacted by COVID-19, but also by pre-existing geopolitical factors such as international trade negotiations and a significantly stressed oil and gas industry, the latter being a key driver of environmental work.

While most job losses in Canada are expected to be temporary, there is a growing sentiment that some industries, occupations or regions will take longer to recover. Many environmental jobs are expected to rebound ahead of others and continue to provide career opportunities, due in part to job creation, but also due to very high levels of retirement. Ultimately, the path from recession to recovery rests on decisions made by industries, governments, educational institutions and other stakeholders.

Highlights

Roughly **18.7 million** people were employed in Canada in 2019, of which, about **620,100 (3.3%—or 1 in every 30)** were environmental workers. Environmental roles were present in every region and practically every occupation, offering a broad range of job opportunities.

Together, job growth and retirement will account for **233,500** net job openings by 2029—equivalent to **38%** of environmental employment levels observed in 2019.

• Environmental employment is expected to rise by 8%, resulting in 50,100 new jobs needing to be filled in the next decade.

"The environmental labour market is still growing, though the COVID crisis has taken its toll. It's now up to employers, policy makers, academia and our workforce to stay focused on furthering the environmental economy as our recovery takes hold."

> Kevin Nilsen, President & CEO, ECO Canada

• 183,400 additional job openings are projected within the forecast period, as close to 30% of the workforce transitions into retirement.

Nearly half of the hiring needs will be for core environmental workers or those in roles requiring environmental-specific knowledge, skills or experience.





Labour market data and insights inform decision making

Stakeholders have relied on ECO Canada for nearly 30 years to estimate the size of the environmental workforce and hiring needs across Canada. This report profiles:



The environmental workforce in 2019

2

Sectoral shifts and job opportunities for environmental workers nationally and regionally to 2029



The demand for environmental workers by occupation



The conclusions drawn from our research

Our goal is to inform decision making by employers, governments, educators and trainers, workers and job seekers, and students, among others.



This study presents the forecasted **net environmental job openings in Canada from 2019 to 2029** that result from the creation of new jobs (**expansion demand**) and jobs that become available as people retire (**replacement demand**). For readability, numbers have been rounded.

Our labour demand outlook integrates three main sources of data: (1) job postings, (2) Statistics Canada's Census and Labour Force Survey data, and (3) Employment and Social Development Canada's Canadian Occupational Projection System (COPS). The information we take from these sources helps us estimate Canadian environmental job opportunities within the next decade. This is done by identifying the 2019 EnviroShare—the proportion of environmental workers compared to all workers at the occupational and regional level—and by applying these to forecasted employment data. Finally, we validate our estimates with our Labour Market Information (LMI) National Advisory Committee and other stakeholders.

Refer to <u>Canada's Environmental Labour</u> <u>Market Estimates from 2019 to 2029:</u> <u>Scope and Methodology</u> to learn more about our workforce definitions, methodology and assumptions.



ENVIRONMENTAL EMPLOYMENT ESTIMATES



1 in every 30 was an Environmental Worker

Across Canada, environmental priorities, regulations, and investment in the areas of cleantech and green infrastructure have intensified over the last decade, contributing to the substantial growth of green jobs. Analysis of data available for this report suggests that environmental employment is healthy and robust. In 2019, about **1 in every 30 workers in Canada (or 3.3% EnviroShare)** was in an environmental role.



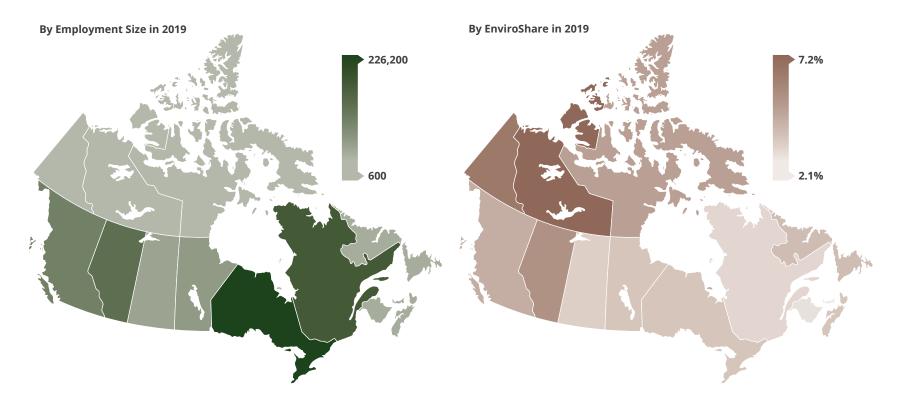
The EnviroShare, or the proportion of environmental to total workers, differs by occupation and by region.

Broadly speaking, **620,100** of Canada's **18.7 million** employed population in 2019 were environmental workers—nearly the same size as Manitoba's overall employment! Of these, about **46%** were core environmental workers (refer to *The environmental workforce redefined* on page 7).

Environmental workers are present in every Canadian province and territory. Reflecting the geographical distribution of Canada's working population, **the majority of environmental workers are in Ontario, Quebec, Alberta and British Columbia**. Although less than 1% of the 2019 environmental workforce was in the territories, the region collectively has the highest EnviroShare at 6.4%.

Figure 1

The Environmental Workforce across Canada



620,100 ENVIRONMENTAL WORKERS ACROSS CANADA OR 3.3% OF TOTAL EMPLOYMENT IN CANADA!

The environmental workforce redefined

In 2019, we revised our approach to measuring and forecasting Canada's environmental workforce by encompassing those in various industries, occupations or regions that drive and support the goals of natural resource management, environmental protection, and sustainability. Our combined definition of the environmental workforce now also includes **those directly employed within the environmental goods and services sector**, regardless of occupation, in addition to the **core environmental workforce**, defined as workers requiring specialized environmental competencies, regardless of industry employer. Redefining the environmental workforce combined with the growth in Canada's employed labour force led to a considerable adjustment in our environmental employment estimates. In 2017, we estimated <u>364,000</u> environmental workers using the original definition, and in 2019, we estimated **620,100** environmental workers using the expanded definition.

Environmental workers were matched with **458 of 500 National Occupational Classifications (NOC)** in Canada using the new approach. In contrast, limiting the definition to core environmental workers resulted in only **60 occupational matches**. See our <u>Spotlight</u> to learn more about Canada's core environmental workforce.







ENVIRONMENTAL HIRING OUTLOOK



Moderate Job Growth Expected to 2029

Canada's environmental job market is influenced by several factors, including regulation, private and public sector investment, innovation, demographic shifts, and environmental priorities. We are optimistic that jobs will return, as data and trends point to new opportunities materializing between now and 2029.

The environmental employment outlook for Canada is moderate at **8.1% growth** from 2019 to 2029 (**50,100 new jobs**)—in keeping with the overall national job rate projections. We expect to see higher growth rates within energy efficiency, clean and alternative energy, clean technology (cleantech), nature conservation, sustainable transportation, green building and construction, and water quality. As the economy rebounds from the pandemic, heightened government investment in these areas can lift the sector further and position Canada as a global leader. This opportunity is dependent on our ability to generate revenue through commercialization and innovation in support of the environmental economy, which will strengthen the workforce and create jobs.

Figure 2

Environmental Employment in Canada, 2019 to 2029

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Spotlight: Shifting Priorities across Industries and Roles

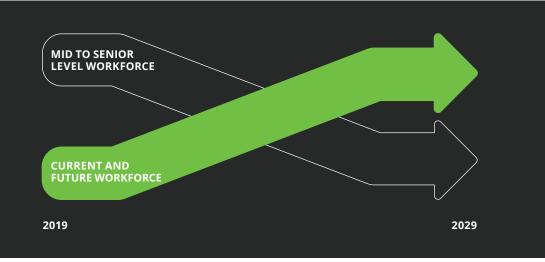
The reduced investment in Canada's resource extraction sectors means that jobs within natural resource management and impact assessments may see tempered growth in the 10-year period. Environmental work will intensify in other areas, however, propelled by major development projects in public transportation and infrastructure, liquefied natural gas, utilities, and health services. Additionally, there could be a temporary spike in site assessments and reclamation, as programs are launched to clean up abandoned oil and gas wells and mining sites.

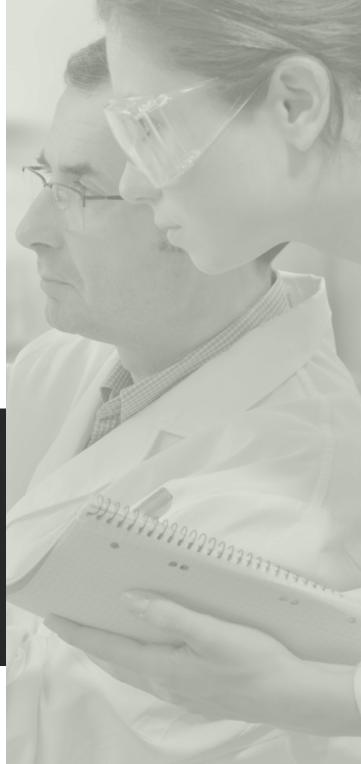
Environmental jobs associated with policy and legislation, research and development, communications and public awareness, and sustainability are expected to grow over the long-term. Green (or blue) mandates and programs will also help boost activity within nature conservation, water quality, energy efficiency, cleantech, and many others. Finally, Canada's shift to a low-carbon economy is also driving sustained growth within construction, manufacturing, and service sectors, all critical to developing high-performance buildings, low-carbon building materials, and sustainable transportation.

Retirements to Drive 4X more Hiring

The larger opportunity for environmental workers will come from the gradual retirement of an estimated **183,400 employees**. Within the next decade, nearly **30%** of the current environmental workforce will vacate their mostly mid to senior level roles, creating career progression opportunities for current and future workers.

While this fact presents an opportunity for emerging workers, it also presents an organizational challenge as retirees take their knowledge, skills and experience with them. Employers might encourage senior workers to remain a little longer to mitigate potential productivity losses and help advance business and environmental goals, while also adopting succession planning strategies that include knowledge transfer and workforce development programs.



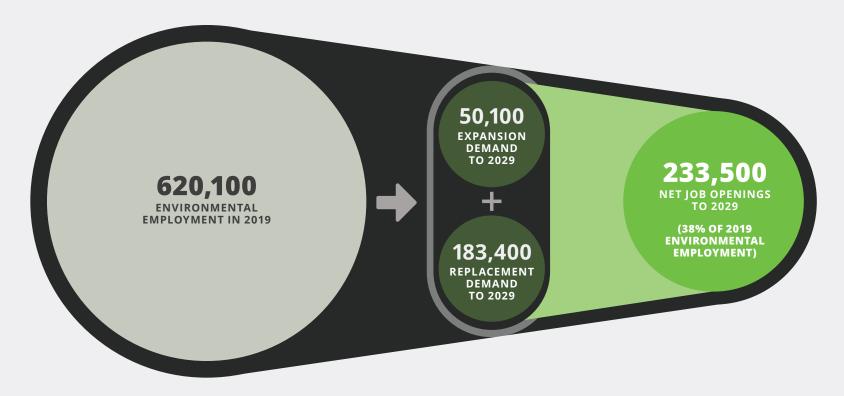


Substantial Hiring Needs in the Decade Ahead

Together, expansion and replacement demands for environmental workers combine for nearly **233,500** net job openings by 2029. This adds up to nearly **38%** of 2019 employment.

Figure 3

Environmental Net Hiring Requirements from 2019 to 2029





REGIONAL HIRING OUTLOOK



- Every province and territory in Canada will need new environmental workers over the next ten years.
- Ontario is expected to contribute nearly 40% of all net environmental job openings to 2029 (90,100 jobs).

Green Job Opportunities in Every Canadian Region

Every province and territory in Canada will be looking for environmental workers over the next ten years, with opportunities resulting from jobs in new or expanding industries, as well as openings created by retirees.

By sheer numbers, **Ontario** is expected to take the lion's share of net environmental job openings by 2029, representing nearly 40% of all openings (90,100 jobs) across Canada. The province is working towards upskilling the current workforce and attracting more people to the building sector and low-carbon construction. Further, Ontario will experience the highest rate of replacement demand at over 30% of 2019 employment levels.

Quebec, the second largest provincial employer of environmental workers, is expected to see reduced employment growth during the forecast period (3%), compared to the higher growth rates observed leading up to 2019. In fact, 9 in every 10 net job openings in the province will come from workforce retirement rather than job creation. Quebec will, however, focus its environmental commitment on sustainably managing its natural resources, relying on renewable energy, reducing the use of plastics, and repurposing recycled materials, among other priorities.

Alberta is expected to see the highest growth rate of environmental employment at almost 14%, resulting in 14,400 new jobs to 2029. Job growth will likely be driven by investment in cleantech, emissions reduction and renewable energy by businesses and individual consumers, and supported by retraining and upskilling the province's unemployed workers. As well, many environmental consulting firms are based in the province. Factoring in replacement demand, the province will need to fill 44,900 net jobs over the next decade—or more than 43% of 2019 employment levels.

The **Northwest Territories** has the highest concentration of environmental workers at 7.2% EnviroShare. **Yukon** is a close second with 6.9% EnviroShare. The remediation of contaminated extraction sites is expected to provide significant environmental job opportunities over the next several decades. This is partially due to the now closed Faro Mine in Yukon and Giant Mine in the Northwest Territories, but also to a growing number of federally and provincially owned contaminated sites. These initiatives provide tremendous opportunities for local and Indigenous businesses and workers.

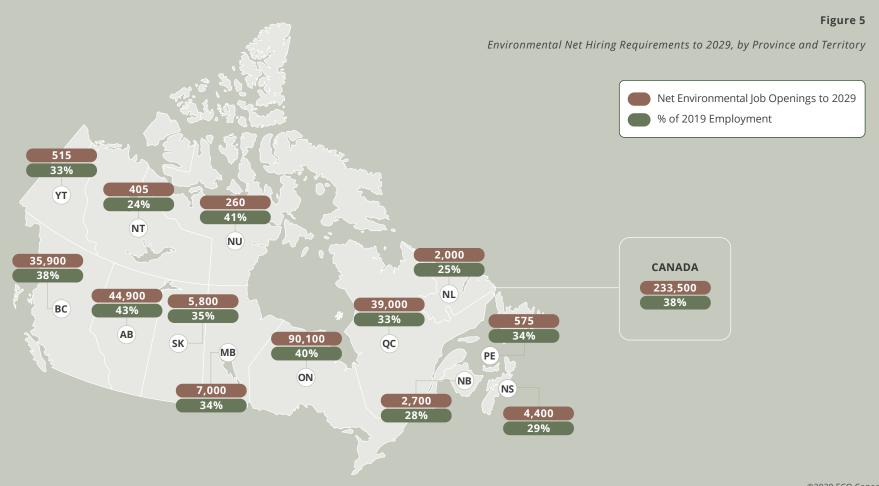
- Alberta is expected to see the highest growth of its rate of environmental employment at almost 14%, resulting in 14,400 new jobs.
- The Northwest Territories has the highest concentration of environmental workers at 7.2% EnviroShare, with Yukon a close second at 6.9% EnviroShare.



Across the rest of the country, environmental jobs will come mostly from business investment and government initiatives. British Columbia's Site C dam and hydroelectric generating station will be a significant source of electricity, and the province's CleanBC program promotes the widespread use of clean and renewable energy. Saskatchewan workers are expected to benefit from infrastructure investment including projects to source clean energy, as well as landfill and water treatment/wastewater management.



Manitoba's Keeyask hydroelectric generating station and the funding of twenty watershed projects within the province will provide environmental employment opportunities. In the Atlantic provinces, the Ocean Aware project will develop and commercialize solutions to monitor fish and the ocean environment, and green jobs will come from energy efficiency programs such as **Nova Scotia's** EfficiencyOne and **New Brunswick's** Atlantica Centre for Energy. Clearly, Canada is putting its weight behind a low-carbon and greener future.



Strong replacement demand

When it comes to replacement demand, the regional perspective mirrors the national outlook, as most net hiring over the next 10 years will come from retirement. In fact, replacement demand is the main driver of net hiring within Atlantic Canada, as the region's environmental employment will see little growth in the next decade. The exception is Prince Edward Island, which is forecasted to increase environmental employment by 9% to 2029. Shifts in occupations and skills will still occur in the region given the anticipated rise of environmental jobs within the blue economy, and anticipated decline in other sectors such as in natural resources.





OCCUPATIONAL HIRING OUTLOOK

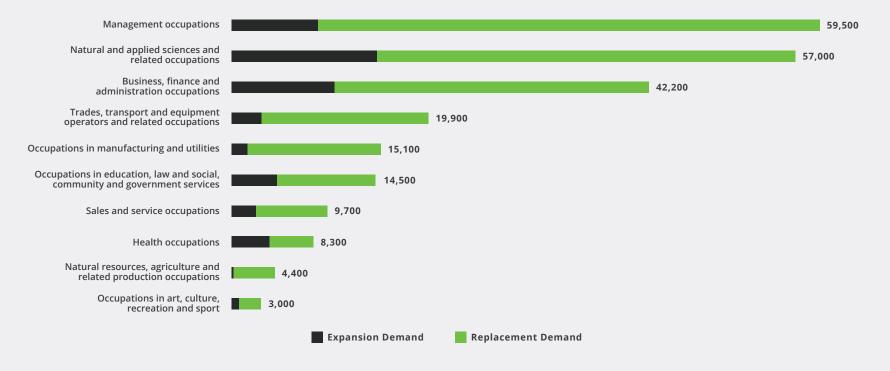


Green Job Opportunities in Every Job Family

Environmental job opportunities will exist in every job family in Canada over the next decade. Through job creation as well as high levels of retirement, nearly 70% of all openings (158,700 jobs) will be in roles related to (1) management, (2) natural and applied sciences, and (3) business, finance and administration.

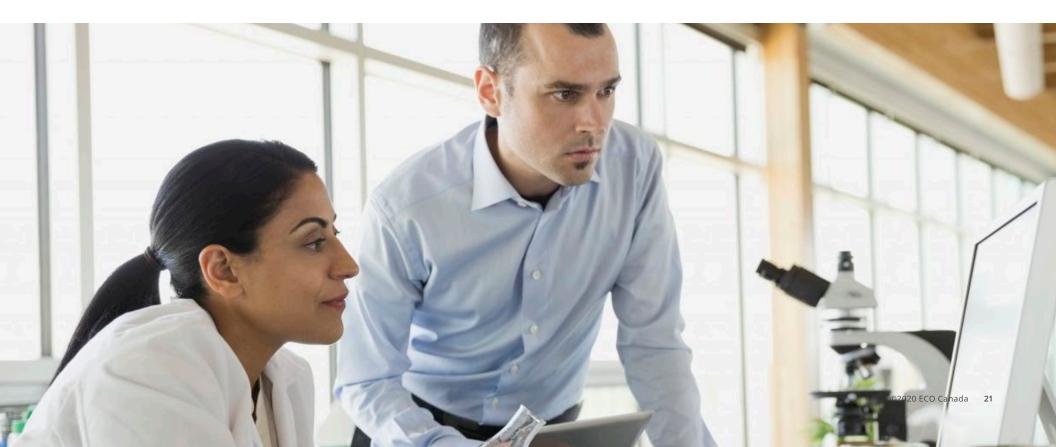
Figure 7

Environmental Net Hiring Requirements to 2029, by Job Family



As with overall net job openings, Ontario will again see the greatest number of environmental job opportunities within the top three job families:

- In management roles, Ontario will have more than 38% of the estimated 59,500 expected openings. After Ontario, the majority of managerial jobs will open up in BC and Alberta, followed by Quebec.
- **Those seeking employment in natural and applied sciences** will find the most opportunities in Ontario with 39% of the 57,000 openings, followed by Alberta at 23%.
- **Occupations related to business support** will offer the third largest number of opportunities to 2029, with Ontario seeing the larger share (42% of 42,200 jobs), followed by Quebec at 20%.



Spotlight on Core Workers: A Key Component to Responsible and Sustainable Economic Growth

Core environmental workers are key to advancing our green economy and meeting policy or values-driven environmental targets. Core workers have invested and prepared for the roles they are in by honing environmental-specific knowledge, skills or training, including the ability to integrate multiple disciplines and work across industries. In 2019, about **46%** of the Canadian environmental workforce, or **285,500** individuals, were core workers. Concentrated within 60 occupational classifications (NOC), this spotlight reflects how employment and retirement trends should play out for core workers.

Table 1

Top Occupations within the Core Environmental Workforce in 2019

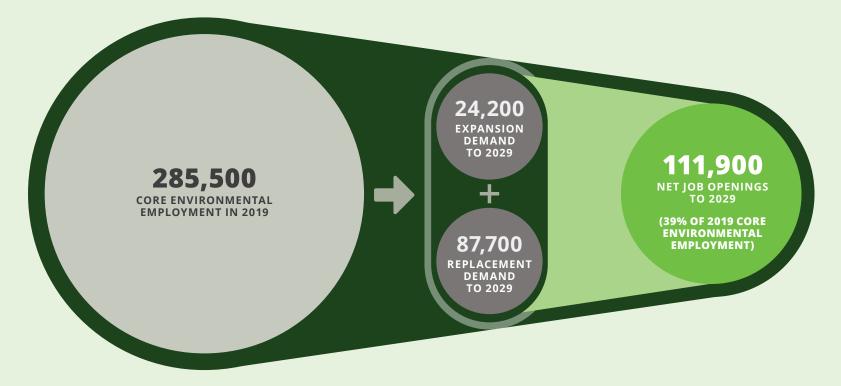
by Environmental Employment Size		by EnviroShare
Civil engineers (32,200)	1	Forestry professionals (72.8%)
Administrative officers (29,800)	2	Meteorologists and climatologists (60.1%)
Senior managers – health, education, social and community services and membership organizations (13,800)	3	Water and waste treatment plant operators (60.0%)
Senior managers – construction, transportation, production and utilities (13,000)	4	Civil engineers (52.3%)
Construction managers (12,700)	5	Forestry technologists and technicians (51.1%)

Core environmental workers are concentrated within 60 occupational classifications and are essential to advancing the green economy. Over the next decade, net job openings for core environmental workers should amount to more than **39%** of 2019 employment levels—or **111,900** jobs.

- The core workforce is anticipated to grow at a slightly faster rate than the total environmental workforce, at **8.5%** or **24,200** new jobs.
- The retirement rate is also higher for the core environmental workforce at **31%**, which could result in **87,700** additional job openings to 2029. This is not surprising, since many of the core workers are in managerial or specialized roles.

Figure 8

Core Environmental Net Hiring Requirements to 2029





Managerial roles will account for over a third of core environmental net job openings.

Managerial roles make up a significant portion of the current and future core environmental workforce.

First, 20 of the 60 occupations mapped to core environmental workers were managerial roles. In addition, management occupations represented 30% of 2019 core environmental employment—or 85,300 workers.

Finally, from 2019 to 2029, 35% of net job openings—or 39,300 core environmental jobs—will be in managerial roles, where 85% of hiring needs will be driven by replacement demand. The top three provinces offering managerial opportunities from 2019 to 2029 are Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia.



Forestry professionals have the highest concentration of environmental jobs.

Forestry professionals, who conduct research, develop plans, and administer and direct programs related to the management and harvesting of forest resources, have the highest EnviroShare (73%) among the occupations mapped to the core environmental workforce.

Some of the main duties of these professionals include: (1) establishing short-term and long-term plans for management of forest land and forest resources, and (2) planning and directing woodlands harvesting, reforestation, silviculture, fire prevention and fire suppression programs, road building, wildlife management, environmental protection, and insect and vegetation control programs.

The number of net job openings by 2029 for this occupation is 1,115—or 31% of 2019 environmental employment levels. The top three provinces offering opportunities to forestry professionals from 2019 to 2029 are British Columbia, Quebec and Alberta.



Engineering occupations will account for over 23,400 net environmental job openings to 2029.

Overall, Engineering occupations comprise a significant share of environmental employment. This reflects the growing need for sustainable infrastructure (transportation, energy, buildings and construction materials), site assessment and remediation, and the widespread adoption of low-carbon designs, technologies and materials used in construction.

Civil engineers, Mechanical engineers and Electrical and electronics engineers fill three of the ten largest occupations with core environmental employment in 2019. Collectively, engineering occupations are expected to account for more than 23,400 net job openings by 2029. The top three provinces offering engineering opportunities for core workers from 2019 to 2029 are Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia.

Table 2

Net Hiring Requirements to 2029 for Engineering Occupations within the Core Environmental Workforce

Occupation	Environmental Employment in 2019	EnviroShare in 2019	Net Hiring Requirements to 2029	% of 2019 Employment
Engineering occupations	76,700	25.4%	23,405	30.5%
Civil engineers	32,210	52.3%	9,160	28.4%
Mechanical engineers	9,730	16,8%	3,120	32.0%
Electrical and electronics engineers	7,760	15.7%	2,445	31.5%
Civil engineering technologists and technicians	5,900	24.0%	1,625	27.5%
Engineering managers	5,540	26.4%	2,245	40.5%
Chemical engineers	3,805	29.2%	1,310	34.4%
Industrial and manufacturing engineers	2,670	15.3%	685	25.6%
Petroleum engineers	2,665	30.1%	805	30.3%
Other professional engineers, n.e.c.	1,780	34.5%	775	43.5%
Geological engineers	1,590	49.5%	485	30.6%
Industrial engineering and manufacturing technologists and technicians	1,540	8.5%	335	21.9%
Mechanical engineering technologists and technicians	1,510	6.8%	415	27.4%

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WORKFORCE STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS



Post-Pandemic Decisions and the Environmental Economy

The state of our workforce at the start of this decade was undoubtedly altered by the COVID-19 pandemic. The larger employment and demographic trends that were in play when we developed our forecasts, however, are expected to continue over these ten years. **Though the estimated rate of growth has slowed to a moderate 8%, the anticipated net environmental job openings to 2029 could approach a quarter million.** The replacement of retired workers will contribute to 75% of net openings, and new job requirements will account for 25%.

How and when the environmental economy rebounds will depend largely on market forces, regulations, and decisions made by governments and employers. A sustained growth trend will depend on program and investment decisions to further environmental goals, and the successful commercialization of these initiatives.

Another factor affecting economic recovery and environmental jobs is the performance of our natural resources sector, which was already at low or fluctuating levels pre-pandemic. It will be important to monitor whether the decline of oil and gas and mining could spur more growth and investment in the clean energy sector—another key source of environmental employment prior to COVID-19. Workforce retraining and upskilling initiatives play a role in preparing for this growth opportunity.

In addition, infrastructure investment and a growing construction sector will likely have a role in the government's post-pandemic economic response, which is another critical driver of environmental employment, requiring a robust and skilled workforce.

As the world navigates some of the factors ECO Canada identified in this report and at the beginning of the forecast period, the decisions made collectively will influence the overall environmental economy. Investing in human capital matters. In fact, it is integral to the current and future success of Canada's environmental sector. Workforce attraction, retention and development strategies are most successful when viewed as a shared responsibility among employers, workers, governments and educators, as they all play a role. The following are specific recommendations for each of these stakeholders.

ECO Canada's employment programs can help

We can help connect environmental employers with skilled junior talent through wage subsidy programs that provide valuable on-the-job work experience and skills training.

Our HR Services can help with recruitment, talent management and salary benchmarking.

<u>Visit our website</u> to learn the many ways we support environmental employers.

Employers—attract, retain and develop talent

Employers are among the most significantly affected as seen in our research results and would do well to prepare for the substantial loss of seasoned and skilled workers who are at an age to retire. As employers look to attract new workers to meet the demand and prepare them to step into more senior roles, there is an advantage to considering diverse candidates like women, youth, Indigenous and immigrant workers, many of whom often have high levels of skill and experience.

The pandemic and pre-existing factors have had permanent or long-lasting impacts on certain industries, regions and occupations. With a national unemployment rate currently at 11%—some regions and industries measuring higher than others—displaced workers are a viable talent solution, and one that could also mitigate productivity risks given their prior experience, applied knowledge and accumulated skill sets.

Employers can look at any number of ways to retain employees, including keeping them motivated with training and development not only with job-specific upskilling, but also in soft skills. Developing employees will help them move into emerging roles and those left vacant by retiring workers.



Workers and students—know your audience

Reports like this one can help workers and students identify where the greatest prospects are for green jobs related to their areas of interest and study. Networking events and work placement programs can be valuable ways to make connections and gain experience for a long-term environmental career.

In addition to technical skills, workers and students could gain an advantage by developing the soft skills being sought by employers such as communication, collaboration, project management and report writing. Job candidates might also come prepared with a can-do attitude and some knowledge of the industry or company they are entering.

There are numerous job resources offered by governmental agencies and academic institutions, as well as training opportunities and events that support a chosen field of study and help job seekers build their knowledge and their networks.

Figure 9

Top 5 Environmental Knowledge and Technical Skills Deemed Important by Employers



ECO Canada's Environmental Professional (EP®) Designation program can help

An Environmental Professional (EP®) Designation recognizes experts in the field.

Our EP program offers up-to-the-minute resources and training to maintain professional standards and offers a mentorship program for connection and career advice.

<u>Visit our website</u> to learn the many ways we can support environmental careers.

Educators and Trainers—help prepare and fill gaps

The pandemic-driven slowdown has not only impacted labour and skills requirements today, it could have lasting impacts on the labour market and career decisions after the dust settles.

Online instruction and learning have unexpectedly become a requirement and could become complementary to classroom instruction indefinitely. Educators and trainers are devising safe ways to deliver lab and field instruction to smaller groups or even remotely, while exploring applied learning modules to help transition from class to career.

Students of all disciplines could benefit from additional environmental courses in their curricula, even learners already enrolled in environmental programs. Where possible, environmental courses could be integrated into a program's curriculum or offered as electives as a way to build and prepare our environmental workforce. Educators could also prepare students for the increasingly digitized workforce, keeping them in step with industry's rapid technological advancements.

ECO Canada will continue to monitor the environmental labour landscape and provide academia with analysis to inform decisions on programming, and how best to prepare students and transitioners for current and future roles.

Governments and Regulators—keep environmental mandates and workforce front of mind

Workforce planning helps all involved have the right people in the right places with the right skills at the right time. Amid so many sectors affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the need to continue fostering Canada's green economy is critical. Federal programs such as the Sectoral Initiatives Program and Essential Skills help prepare workers for current and future environmental jobs, as does the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training.

Given the cross-sectoral nature of the environmental workforce, our stakeholders could benefit from additional labour market intelligence research, essential to monitoring and responding to environmental workforce trends.

Overall, a continued commitment to environmental goals and investment in relevant programs will keep environmental employers, workers and educators aligned with national environmental goals and global commitments as we emerge from the recession. An increased focus on helping innovators move from ideas to revenue generation is also key, as increased commercialization can further entrench Canada at the forefront of clean technology.

ECO Canada will continue to study the demand and supply sectors and report on our environmental labour market so that we are ready to meet the needs of an expanding environmental economy.





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- Bow Valley College
- Environmental Services Association
 of Alberta
- Environmental Services Association
 Maritimes
- EnviroSearch Ltd.
- General Motors
- Government of New Brunswick
- Government of Saskatchewan
- Indigenous Works

- Labour Market Information Council
- Ken Banister and Associates
- North Shore Environmental Consultants
- Royal Roads University
- Ryerson University
- SAIT Polytechnic
- Stantec
- Stratos
- Tait Human Capital

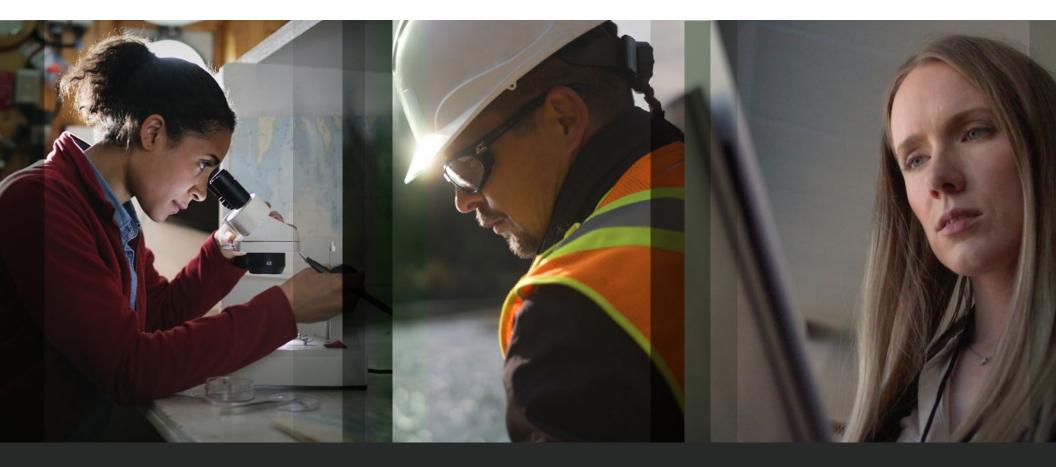
Individuals or organizations interested in contributing to future research projects can send a request to <u>research@eco.ca</u>.

About Us

ECO Canada is the steward for the Canadian environmental workforce across all industries. From job creation and wage funding, to training and labour market research, we champion the end-to-end career of an environmental professional. Our efforts promote and drive responsible and sustainable economic growth to ensure that environmental care and best practice are a priority.

We are thought leaders in the environmental labour market. Our workforce knowledge spans nationally across all provinces and territories, as well as within major Canadian industries including energy, forestry, mining, agriculture, manufacturing and construction.

We gather and analyze trends within the environmental workforce and provide up-to-date, relevant data and insights for policy, business and educational purposes. Our reports support our stakeholders in four key areas: (1) employers—plan and attract qualified candidates, (2) individuals—prepare for and build their environmental careers, (3) governments—develop programs and update policies, (4) educators and trainers—adapt their offerings to prepare the workforce that is and will be in demand.



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ECO Canada relies on employees and partners from Vancouver to Windsor to Montreal and Halifax, as well as our Territories. Visit our website or contact us for more information.





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