A photograph showing a line of hands from diverse people, each holding a small green seedling in soil. The hands are arranged in a diagonal line from the top left to the bottom right, creating a sense of unity and care for the environment.

A DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL WORKFORCE

MARCH 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About ECO Canada	4
Acknowledgements	5
Disclaimer	6
Executive Summary	7
Canada Needs More Environmental Workers	9
Exploring the Demographic Landscape of Environmental Workers in Canada	11
The Environmental Workforce by Age	12
The Environmental Workforce by Gender	15
The Environmental Workforce by Education Level	18
The Environmental Workforce by Identity	20
Spotlight: Workforce Trends in Indigenous-led or Indigenous Owned Organizations	25
From Data to Action: Bridging Gaps in the Pathway to a Diverse Talent Pool	30
Appendix A: Profile of Survey Respondents	33
Appendix B: Canada's Environmental Goods and Services Sector	37
Appendix C: Study Methodology	39



ABOUT ECO CANADA

Environmental Careers Organization (ECO Canada) is a not-for-profit corporation established in 1992 as part of Canada's Sector Council Initiative. ECO Canada is focused on identifying, communicating, and meeting the needs of environmental practitioners, employers, educators, and students. Its vision is to build the world's leading environmental workforce.

ECO Canada has supported Canada's environmental workforce by establishing professional development resources, training programs and educational partnerships, conducting in-depth labour market research and providing the largest industry-specific job board.

ECO Canada's programs and services are developed through strong national partnerships, consultative strategic planning, and ongoing labour market research. Its labour market research provides valuable insights into environmental career trends, which can be used by governments, educators, youth, and industry partners to make decisions and formulate strategies. To learn more, please visit www.eco.ca.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We acknowledge the research expertise provided by Leger Marketing Alberta Inc. We are also thankful for the invaluable information provided by the Canadian employers who responded to our survey.

We would also like to thank those who have provided ongoing advice and feedback regarding our research through ECO Canada's Sectoral Workforce Solutions National Advisory Committee.

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

Funded by the Government
of Canada's Sectoral Workforce
Solutions Program



The opinions and interpretations in this publication are ECO Canada's and do not necessarily reflect those held by the Government of Canada.

DISCLAIMER

© 2024 ECO Canada

All rights reserved. The information and projections contained herein have been prepared with data sources ECO Canada has deemed to be reliable. ECO Canada makes no representations or warranties that their labour market estimates are error-free and therefore shall not be liable for any financial or other losses or damages of any nature whatsoever arising from or otherwise relating to any use of its information.

The use of any part of this publication is subject to the Copyright Act. The content may be referenced for general, educational, research, or media purposes with the following citation: Source (or “adapted from”): ECO Canada (2024). www.eco.ca

Unless permitted by ECO Canada, the reader of this report cannot:

Market, export, translate, merge, modify, transfer, adapt, loan, rent, lease, assign, share, sub-license or make available to another person or entity, this report in any way, in whole or in part

Use this report and its contents to develop or derive any other information product or information service for commercial distribution or sale

Use this report and its contents in any manner deemed competitive with any other product or service sold by ECO Canada

To help others benefit from the information presented in this report, individuals or organizations are encouraged to download a copy directly from ECO Canada’s website.

For comments or questions, contact: Research@eco.ca.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The need for environmental workers grows as Canada commits to green economy projects geared towards reducing emissions, encouraging electric vehicle ownerships, moving toward net zero housing, and increasing overall housing availability in the country.

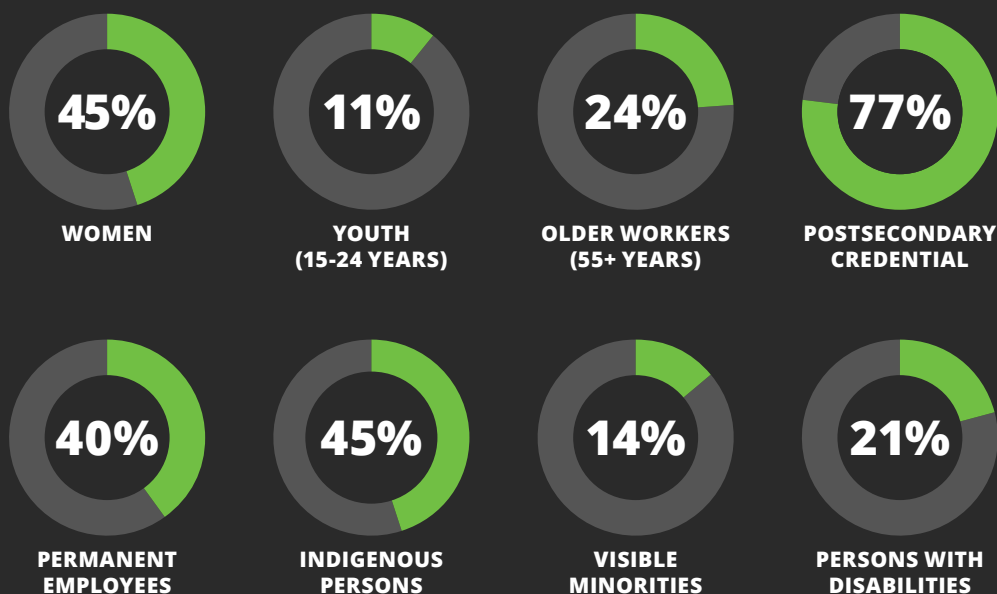
Environmental workers will be critical across all industries such as construction, manufacturing, professional, scientific, and technical services, in driving the operation and sustainability of the green economy projects across Canada. Our 2024 national environmental labour market outlook estimates that about 7% of Canada’s employed population in 2023 were engaged in environmental work¹.

In early 2023, we surveyed **904 employers** of environmental workers in Canada, representing **125,300 employees** and **20,470 environmental workers** across Canada. Our survey results provided the following insights into the composition of the environmental workforce:



¹ Green Goals and great Opportunities : Canada's Environmental Labour Demand Forecast to 2033-March 2024

With a spotlight on Indigenous-led or owned organizations, **224 employers** identified as belonging to an Indigenous organization representing **17,600 employees** and **3,800 environmental workers** across Canada. The composition of environmental employees showed a slightly higher representation among environmental employees than the overall results.



The country is expected to need more than 14,100 new core environmental workers² each year through 2033 to keep up with retirements and economic growth,³ signalling the potential for a shortage of skilled environmental workers over the next decade. As employers recruit new environmental workers, it makes sense for them to take explore all available sources of talent and encourage diversity in the workplace.

² Core environmental workers require environmental-specific skills, knowledge and training.

³ Green Goals and great Opportunities : Canada's Environmental Labour Demand Forecast to 2033-March 2024



CANADA NEEDS MORE ENVIRONMENTAL WORKERS

Canada's interest in a greener economy is evident by policies and investments such as the *2030 Emissions Reduction Plan* which includes building projects geared towards net zero and the switch to electric vehicles.⁴ The Department of Finance's *2023 Fall Economic Statement* also factored in a housing action plan geared towards meeting more housing needs to match population growth with a focus on attracting more construction workers to meet this goal.⁵

Moving these projects forward will require environmental workers. Across all regions and industries, workers will be needed to produce environmental goods and supply environmental services required for Canada's to achieve sustainable economic growth.

About 7% of Canada's 20.9 million employed population in 2023 were engaged in environmental work. The country is expected to need 480,500 new environmental workers by 2033 to keep up with retirements and economic growth.⁶ Industries most in need of environmental workers include:

- Professional, scientific, and technical services – 80,400 net job openings
- Public administration – 76,700
- Construction – 47,100
- Manufacturing – 27,300
- Educational services – 27,300

Fulfilling these job openings in the coming decade will require strategy, attraction, and awareness from employers of environmental workers across all industries, with a probable focus on utilizing the underrepresented groups interested in pursuing careers in an environmental role. Taking advantage of underutilized talent sources may pose a solution out of many to meeting the demand for environmental workers in the country.

4 Environment and Climate Change Canada. *2030 Emissions Reduction Plan – Canada's Next Steps for Clean Air and a Strong Economy* - Canada.ca

5 Department of Finance Canada. *2023 Fall Economic Statement, Chapter1: Canada's Housing Action Plan* (pp.15-25)

6 Green Goals and great Opportunities : *Canada's Environmental Labour Demand Forecast to 2033-March 2024*

DEFINITION OF ENVIRONMENTAL WORKERS

An **environmental worker** is an individual whose work positively contributes to (i) environmental protection; (ii) management of natural resources; or (iii) environmental sustainability.

Environmental workers include those in occupations requiring environmental-specific knowledge, skills or training, regardless of industry (e.g., an Environmental Advisor in a mining company) and those employed in environmental goods and services firms and drive or support their organization's environmental business activities, regardless of occupation or skills. (e.g., an Accountant and a Sustainability Specialist working in a cleantech company).

Sole proprietors, business owners and operators are also included in this definition.





EXPLORING THE DEMOGRAPHIC LANDSCAPE OF ENVIRONMENTAL WORKERS IN CANADA

This report provides insights into the demographic characteristics of Canada's environmental workforce based on a 2023 survey of employers of environmental workers in Canada.⁷ We surveyed 904 environmental employers representing 20,470 environmental employees across Canada. Insights into the results will improve our understanding of the opportunities to increase engagement, especially with the underrepresented groups, in filling environmental roles, in a bid to contribute to the growth in the environmental labour force.

Where data is available, we have highlighted the results for six (6) industries that are top employers of environmental workers in Canada and had the highest employer respondents:

- Environmental consulting services
- Professional scientific and technical services (excluding Environmental consulting services)
- Natural resources (including Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting and Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction)
- Educational services
- Public administration
- Manufacturing

⁷ [Appendix A](#) provides the respondent profile and [Appendix B](#) provides the study methodology.

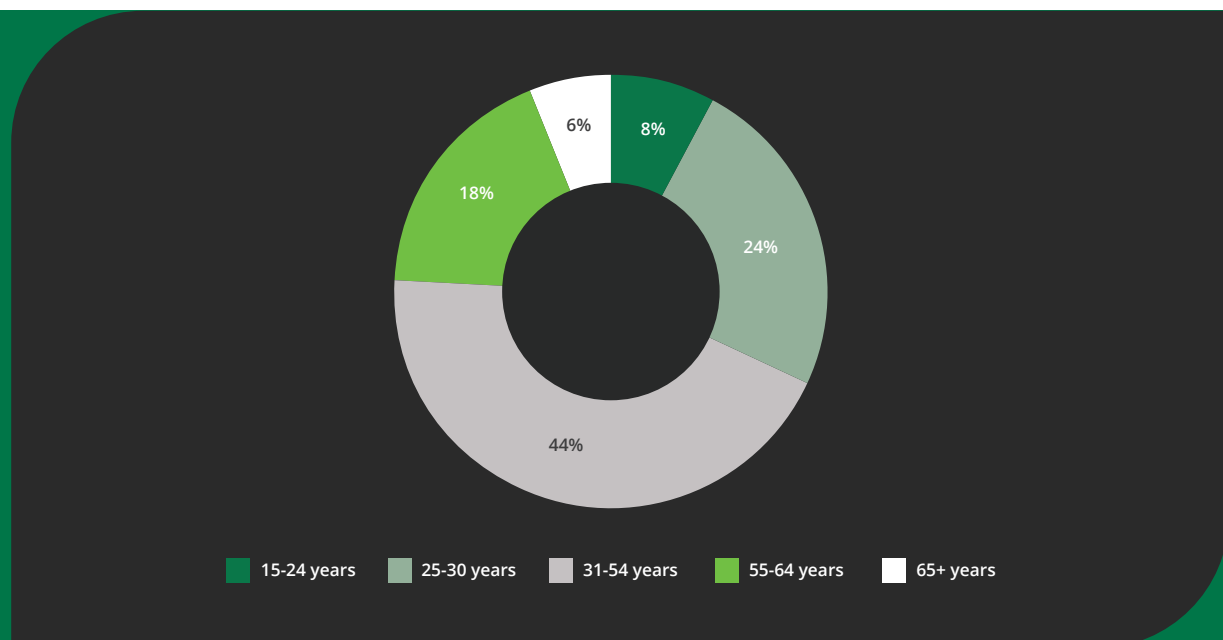
THE ENVIRONMENTAL WORKFORCE BY AGE

Our survey results reveal that 68% of environmental workers were in the core working age group (25-54 years). **See Figure 1.** Younger workers (15-24 years) comprised 8% of Canadian environmental employees and another 24% were 55 years and over (24%).

The 2021 Canadian Census, in comparison, shows a slightly higher representation of youth aged 15 to 24 years (13%) and workers 55 years or over (39%) in the Canadian labour force.⁸ The age representation observed from the survey results suggests an opportunity to encourage younger workers to pursue careers in environmental roles by increasing awareness and/or sensitization of what working in the role/sector entails.

Figure 1

Age Representation in The Environmental Labour Force



Industry representation by age varied (**see Figure 2**). Manufacturing employers had the highest representation of youth at 13% and older workers aged 55 and over (25%). In contrast, environmental consulting services had the lowest representation of youth (8%) and environmental workers aged 55 and over (13%).

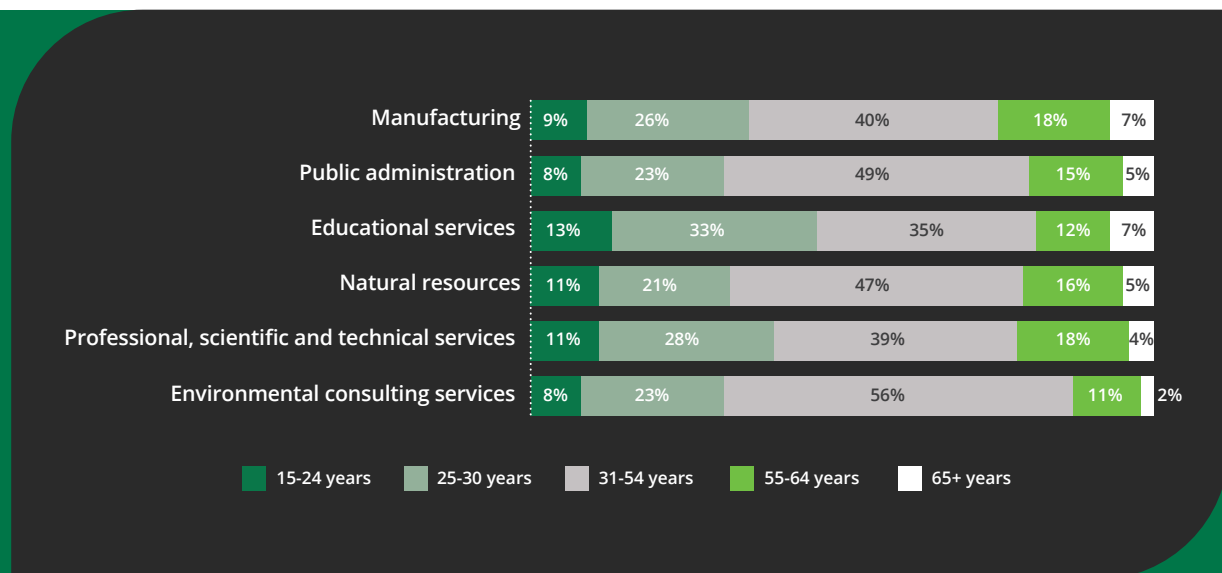
⁸ Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0485-01 Labour force status by age and gender: Canada, provinces and territories, census divisions and census subdivisions

The low share of workers 65 years and over in environmental consulting services is of particular concern. This raises the question of how to fill the environmental roles/openings this will create in the industry with an already low representation of the youths aged 15 to 24 years, who are usually the new entrants into the labour force.

The core working age population (25-54 years) was well represented across all industries, with the highest percentage of environmental workers (79%) in environmental consulting services.

Figure 2

Age Representation Among Top Industry Employers of Environmental Workers



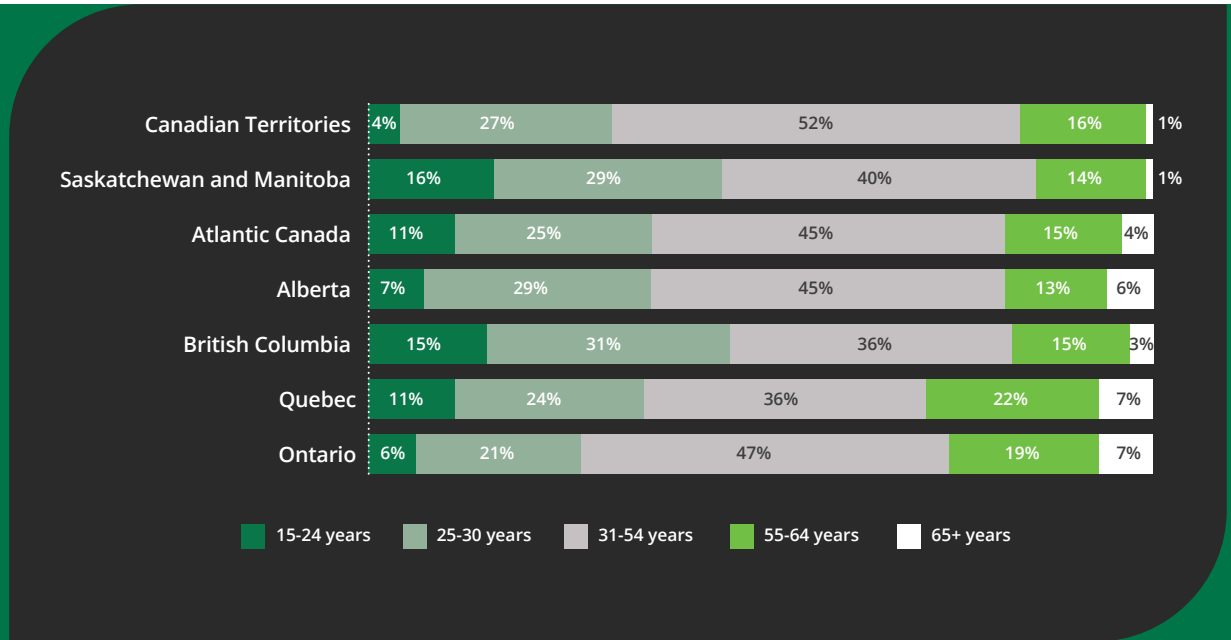
A look at the age distribution of environmental workers across the Canadian regions reveals a somewhat similar but uneven representation compared to the breakdown by industry. **See Figure 3.** Employers of environmental workers in the Canadian Territories seem to have the least representation of the youth aged 15-24 years at 4% and surprisingly followed closely by environmental employers in Ontario at 6%. Both of which are less than the overall average representation of the youth (8%). StatsCan data shows labour force representation⁹ of the youth in the Territories is next to none (0%) while Ontario shows a representation of 5%.

⁹ Statistics Canada. 2021 Census data. Custom data tabulation purchased by ECO Canada.

Similarly, the core working age population aged 25-54 years are well represented among environmental employers across the province with the highest percentage of environmental workers (79%) in the Canadian territories.

Figure 3

Age Representation of Environmental Workers by Region

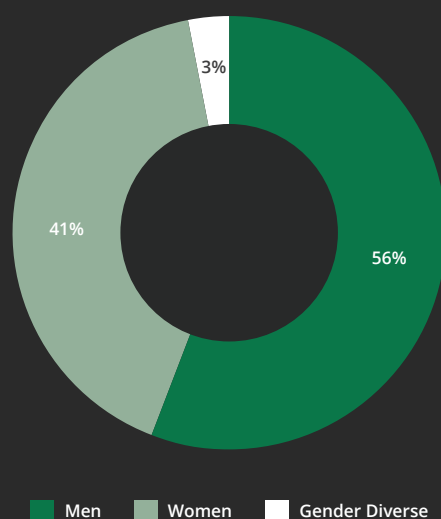


THE ENVIRONMENTAL WORKFORCE BY GENDER

Employers responding to our survey had more men (56%) than women (41%) in their environmental workforces. **See Figure 4.** The 2021 Canadian Census¹⁰ identified a closer gender representation in the labour force with about 52% identified as men in the Canadian labour force and 48% identified as women.

Figure 4

Gender Representation in The Environmental Labour Force



Gender representation across the top industries showed a higher concentration of men than women in the environmental workforce. Employers in public administration and natural resource industries revealed a higher representation of women (47%) in the environmental workforce compared to the other industries. Professional scientific and technical services also had a high representation of women (46%) as environmental workers. **See Figure 5.**

Across the broader Canadian economy, labour force representation of women in professional, scientific, and technical services is about 44% and 49% in public administration.¹¹ These figures are similar to the representation of women in the environmental workforce in the respective industries. Surprisingly, women in natural resources have a lower representation in the Canadian labour force (27%)¹² compared to the environmental workforce (47%).

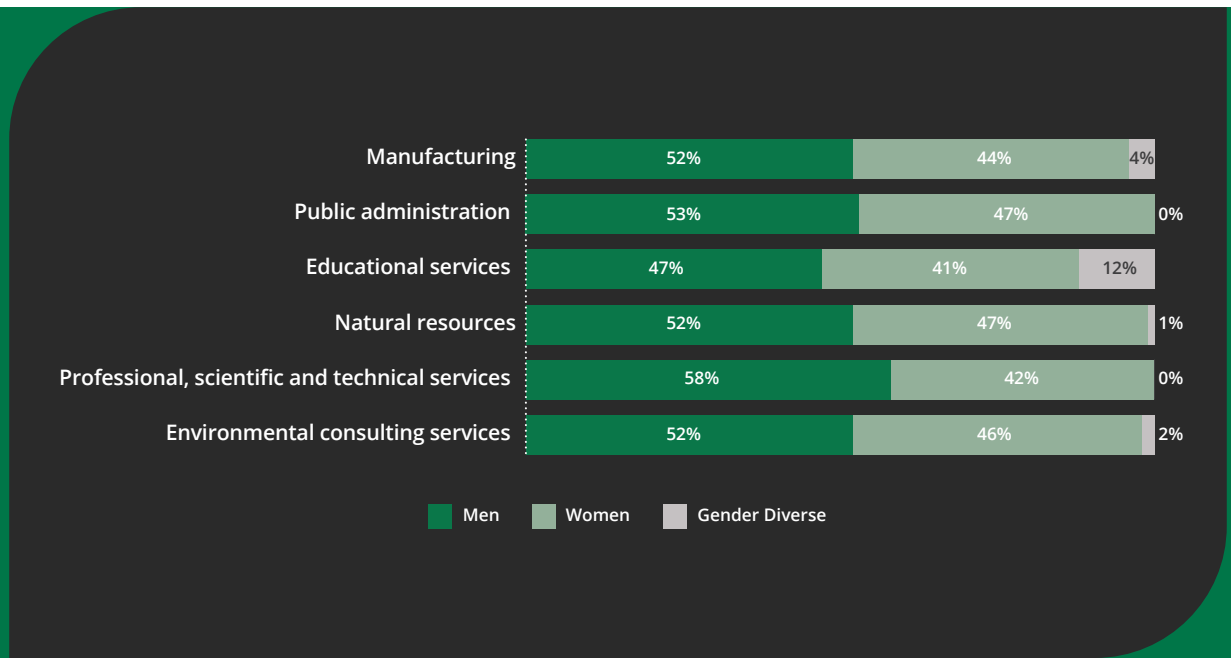
¹⁰ Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0485-01 Labour force status by age and gender: Canada, provinces and territories, census divisions and census subdivisions.

¹¹ Statistics Canada. 2021 Census data. Custom data tabulation purchased by ECO Canada.

¹² Statistics Canada. 2021 Census data. Custom data tabulation purchased by ECO Canada.

Figure 5

Gender Representation Among Top Industry Employers of Environmental Workers



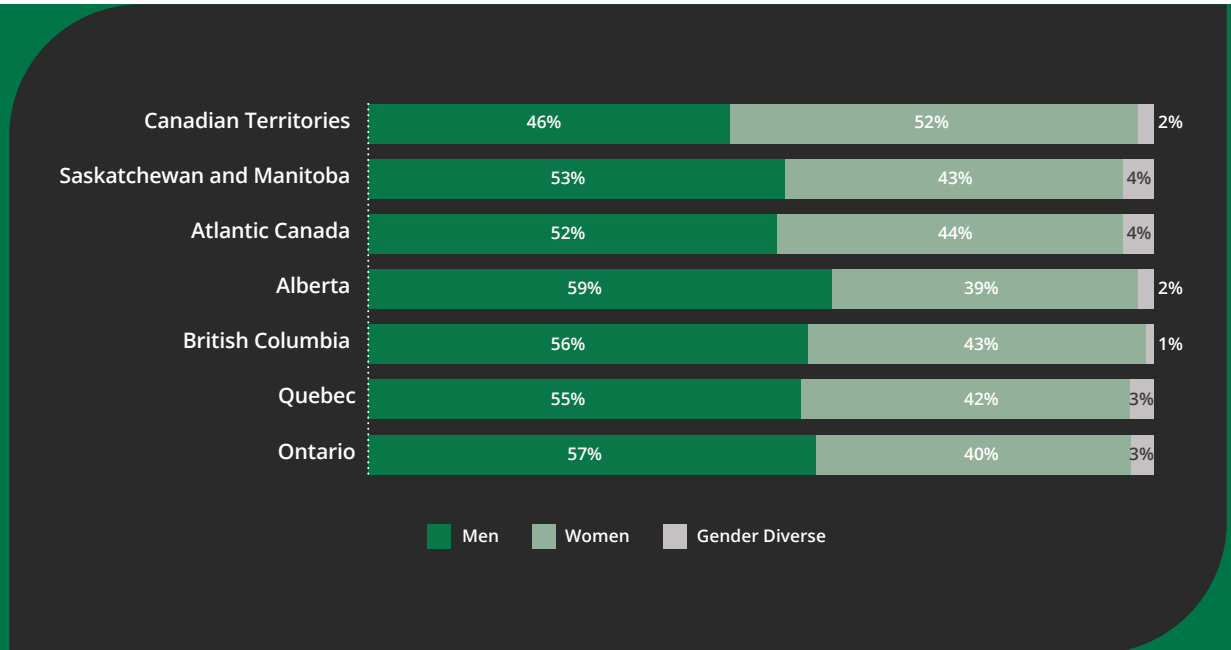
Relatively little variation was observed in the gender distributions of environmental workers across Canadian regions (see Figure 6). Men were more numerous than women in all regions save for the Canadian territories, where 52% of environmental workers were women. Alberta on the other hand, had the lowest share of women (39%) in their environmental workforce.

All other regions have a higher representation of male environmental workers. In the overall Canadian labour force, women represent 49% of workers.¹³

¹³ Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0485-01 Labour force status by age and gender: Canada, provinces and territories, census divisions and census subdivisions

Figure 6

Gender Representation of Environmental Workers by Region

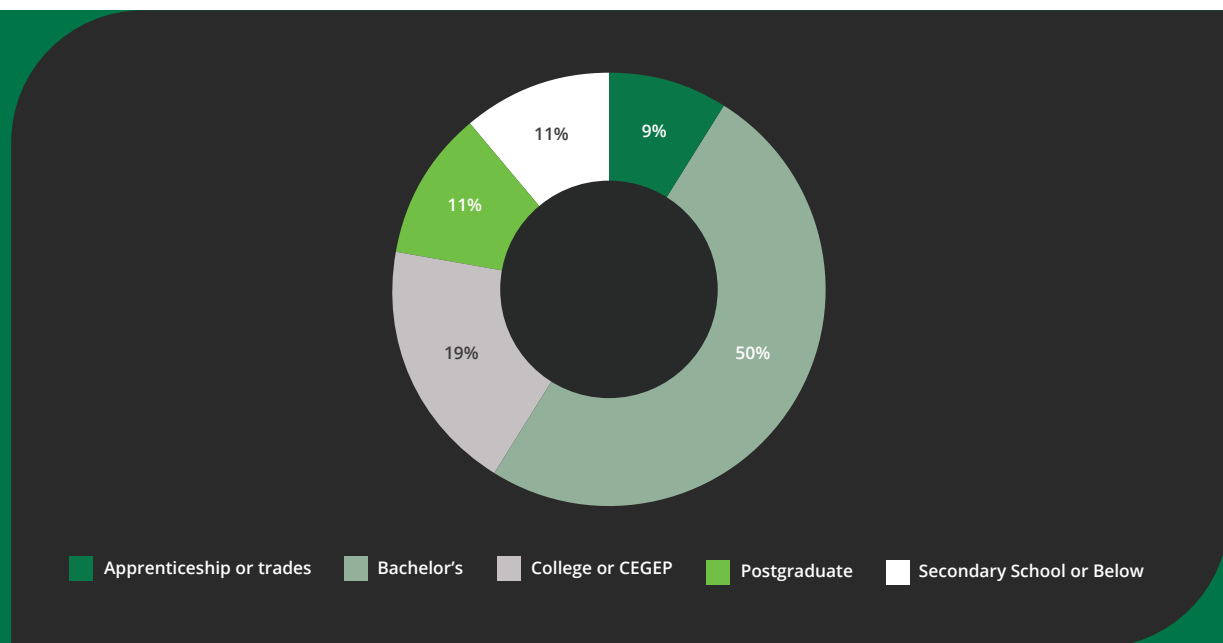


THE ENVIRONMENTAL WORKFORCE BY EDUCATION LEVEL

Most environmental workers represented in our survey had post-secondary credentials (89%). **See Figure 7.** Half of the environmental workers had a bachelor's degree; in contrast, only 21% of the broader Canadian workforce has a bachelor's degree. The share of postgraduate credential holders among the environmental workforce (11%) was close to that of the broader Canadian labour force (10%). Individuals with apprenticeship or trade qualifications (9%) were least represented among environmental workers, but the share of workers with these qualifications is only 4% in the broader Canadian labour force.¹⁴

Figure 7

Educational Attainment in the Environmental Workforce



The manufacturing industry reported the highest shares of environmental workers with secondary school or below (24%) and apprenticeship or trades qualifications (19%) and the smallest shares with bachelor's degrees (22%) and postgraduate credentials (7%). **See Figure 8.**

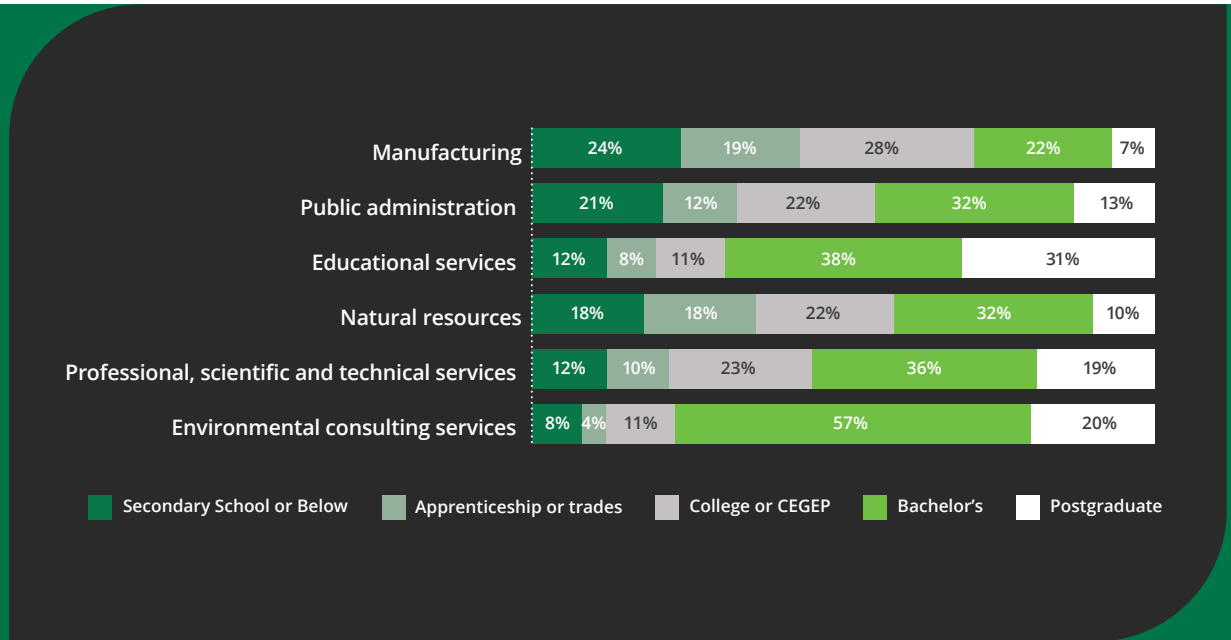
More than half of the environmental workers in the environmental consulting services sector had bachelor's degrees (57%) and one in five held a postgraduate credential. Only 4% of environmental employees in this sector had apprenticeship or trades qualifications.

Postgraduate educational credentials were most common among environmental workers in educational services (31%).

¹⁴ Statistics Canada. Labour force status by highest level of education: Canada, provinces and territories, census divisions and census subdivisions (statcan.gc.ca)

Figure 8

Educational Attainment in the Environmental Workforce for Select Industries



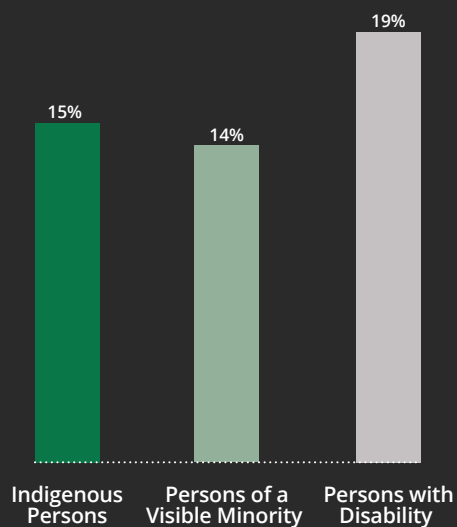
THE ENVIRONMENTAL WORKFORCE BY IDENTITY

Our survey results show a higher representation of Indigenous persons (15%) in the environmental workforce compared to the broader Canadian economy, which shows 4% of Canada's labour force to identify as Indigenous persons.¹⁵

On the other hand, members of a visible minority are better represented in the broader Canadian labour force (34%) than in the environmental workforce (14%).^{16,17} Our survey responses indicate that 19% of the environmental workforce in Canada are persons with disabilities.¹⁸ **See Figure 9.**

Figure 9

Share of Environmental Workers Identified as Indigenous Persons, Persons of a Visible Minority, and Persons with Disability



15 Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0451-01 Labour force status by highest level of education, Indigenous identity, age and gender: Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations with parts. Indigenous refers to individuals identifying themselves as First Nations people, Métis or Inuk (Inuit). First Nation (North American Indian) includes Status and Non-Status Indians.

16 Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0436-01 Labour force status by visible minority, highest level of education and immigrant status: Canada, provinces and territories, census divisions and census subdivisions with a population 5,000 or more

17 Persons of a Visible Minority are persons, other than Indigenous peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour¹⁷. The visible minority population consists mainly of the following groups: South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Arab, Latin American, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean and Japanese.

18 Persons with disabilities are those who have visible or invisible long-term or recurring physical, mental, sensory, psychiatric or learning impairments and who:

- consider themselves to be disadvantaged in employment by reason of that impairment, or
- believe that an employer or potential employer is likely to consider them to be disadvantaged in employment by reason of that impairment, and includes persons whose functional limitations owing to their impairment have been accommodated in their current job or workplace.

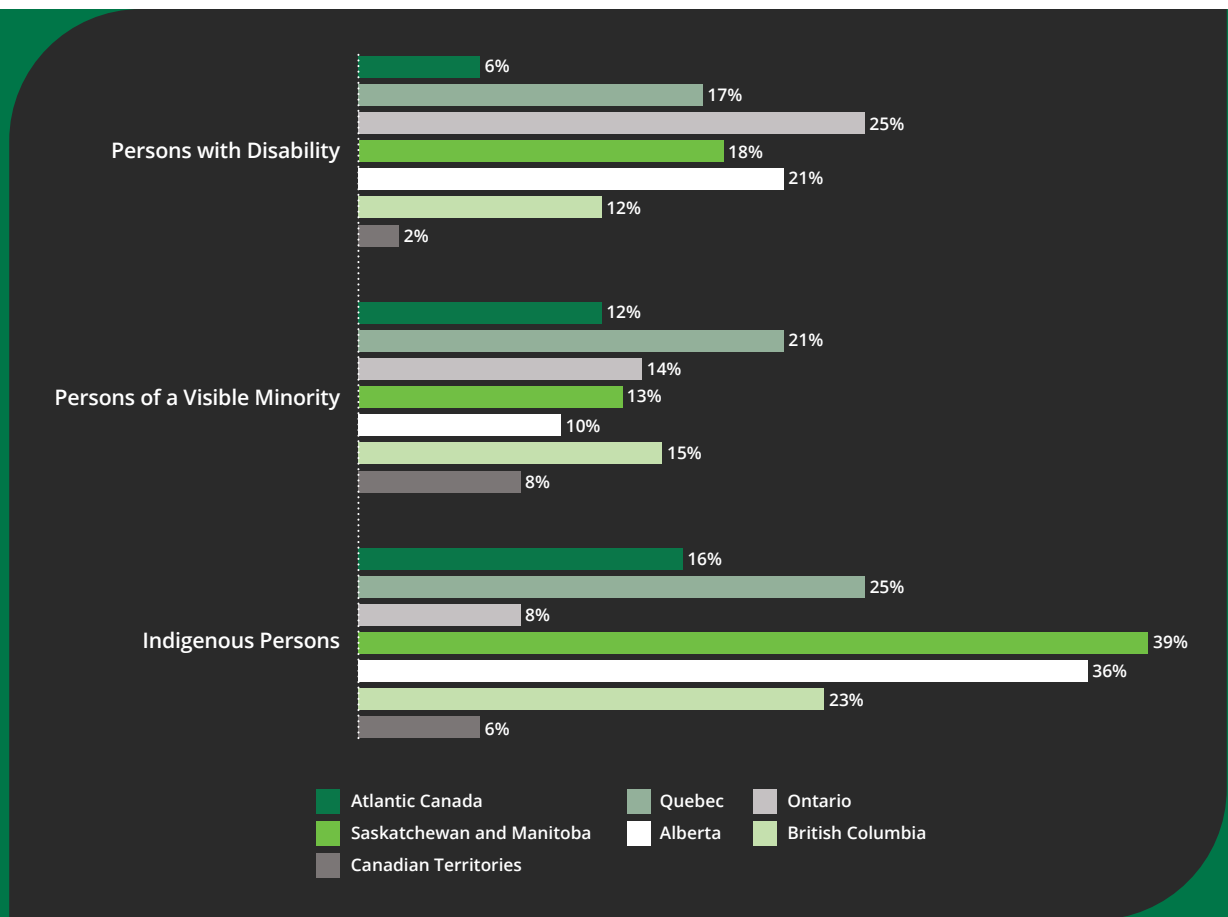
Employers in the prairie provinces reported the highest proportions of Indigenous environmental workers. In Saskatchewan & Manitoba, 39% of environmental employees were identified to be Indigenous persons. The proportion of Indigenous environmental workers in Alberta was reported to be 36%. Employers in Ontario (8%) and the Canadian territories (6%) reported the lowest shares of Indigenous environmental workers. **See Figure 10.**

Quebec employers reported that 21% of their environmental workers were persons of visible minorities (21%). Only 8% of environmental workers in the Canadian territories were reported to be visible minorities.

Persons with disabilities in the environmental workforce were highly represented in Ontario at 25% and Alberta at 21%. The Canadian territories showed the lowest representation of persons with disabilities among environmental workers at 2%.

Figure 10

Share of Environmental Workers Identified as Indigenous Persons, Persons of a Visible Minority, and Persons with Disability – by Region



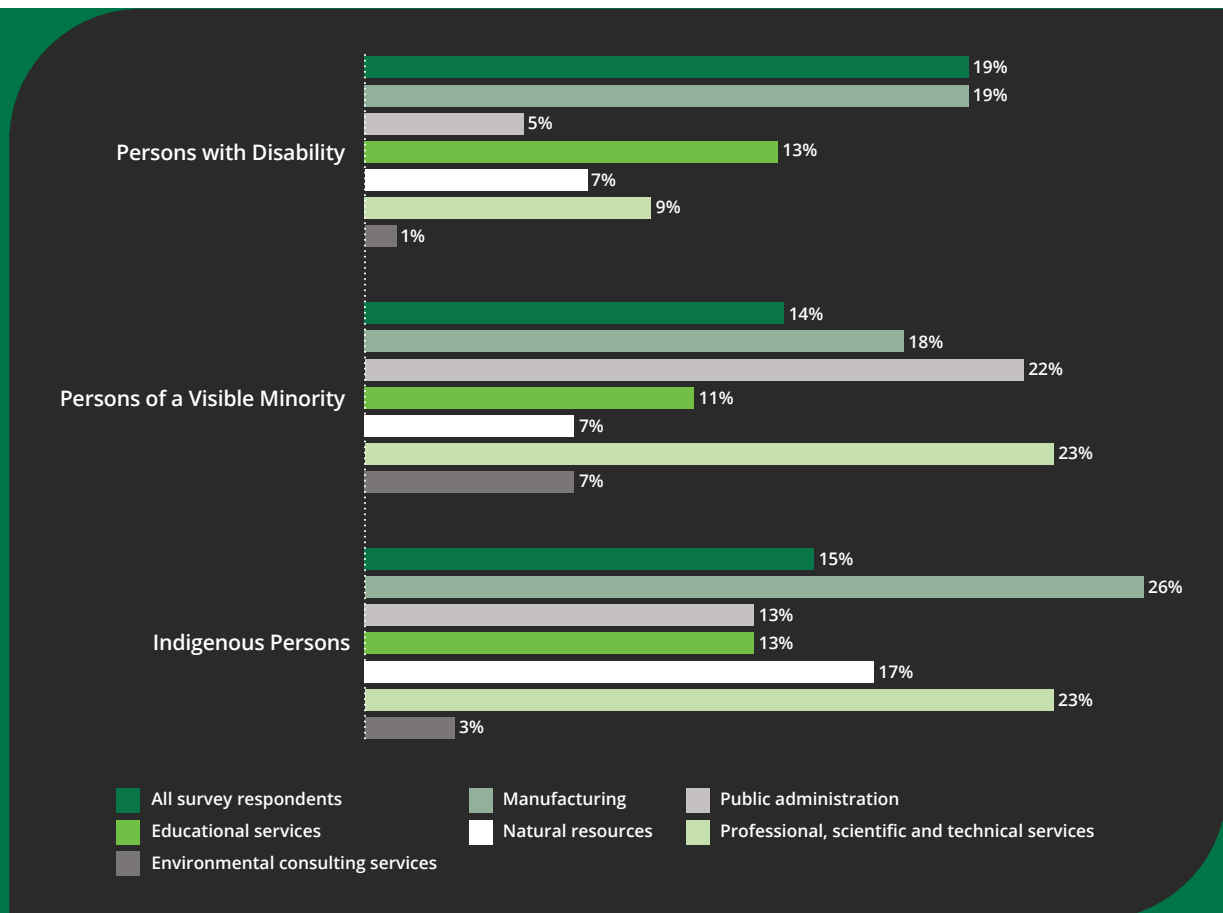
The share of Indigenous persons in the environmental workforce differs widely across industries. **See Figure 11.** Manufacturing (26%) and professional, scientific, and technical services (23%) reported notably high proportions of Indigenous environmental workers. In contrast, the environmental services sector reported only 3% of its environmental workers were Indigenous persons.

The percentage of visible minority workers also varies significantly across top industries, with higher shares of visible minority environmental workers in the professional, scientific, and technical services (23%) and public administration (22%) industry groups. The lowest representation of visible minority workers is seen in the natural resource and environmental consulting industry groups (7%).

The manufacturing sector also has the highest proportion of environmental workers identified as persons with disabilities in our survey, at 19%. The environmental consulting sector has the lowest representation of environmental workers with disabilities at only 1%.

Figure 11

Share of Environmental Workers Identified as Indigenous Persons, Persons of a Visible Minority, and Persons with Disability – by Industry



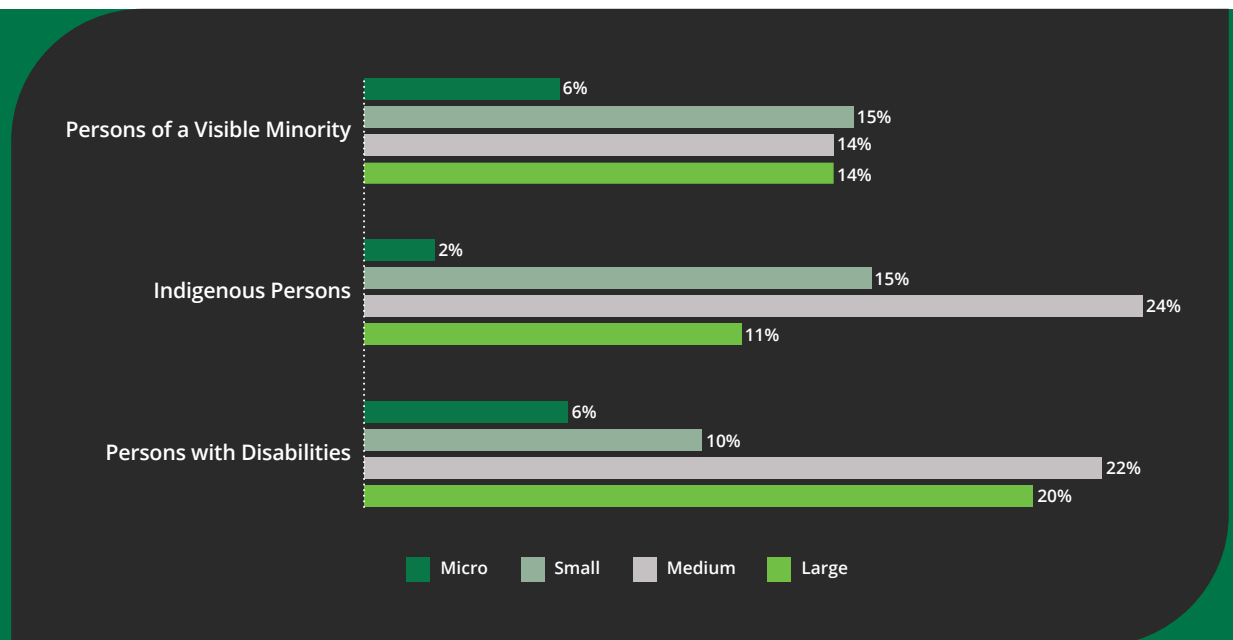
Across organization size, survey results show varied representation of Indigenous persons, visible minorities, and persons with disabilities in the environmental workforce. **See Figure 12.** Indigenous workers are best represented in medium-sized organizations at 24% while surprisingly, large organizations have a lower representation of Indigenous environmental workers at 11%.

Persons with disabilities were also highly represented in medium organizations among environmental workers at 22%. Small organizations on the other hand, had the highest representation of visible minorities in their environmental workforce at 15%.

Overall, micro-organizations had the least representation across the identities.

Figure 12

Share of Environmental Workers Identified as Indigenous Persons, Persons of a Visible Minority, and Persons with Disability – by Organization Size



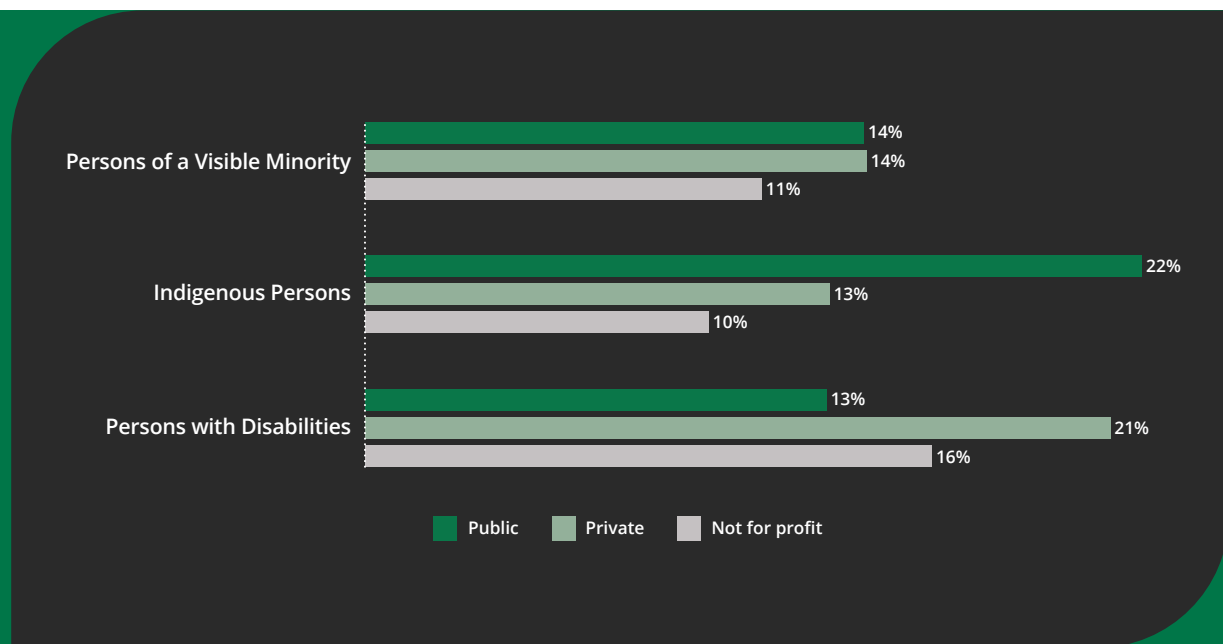
The public sector had the largest share of Indigenous environmental workers (22%), but the lowest proportion of environmental workers identified as persons with disabilities (13%). **See Figure 13.** This is an interesting contrast to the *2022 Labour Force Survey*, which shows that persons with disabilities were most represented within the public sector at 24.3%.¹⁹

Conversely, Indigenous representation is lowest in the not-for-profit sector (10%) while persons with disabilities comprised 21% of the private sector’s environmental workers.

The public and private sectors reported 14% of their environmental workers to be persons of a visible minority. Only 13% of individuals employed in environmental roles within the public sector were identified as persons with disabilities.

Figure 13

Share of Environmental Workers Identified as Indigenous Persons, Persons of a Visible Minority, and Persons with Disability – by Organization Type



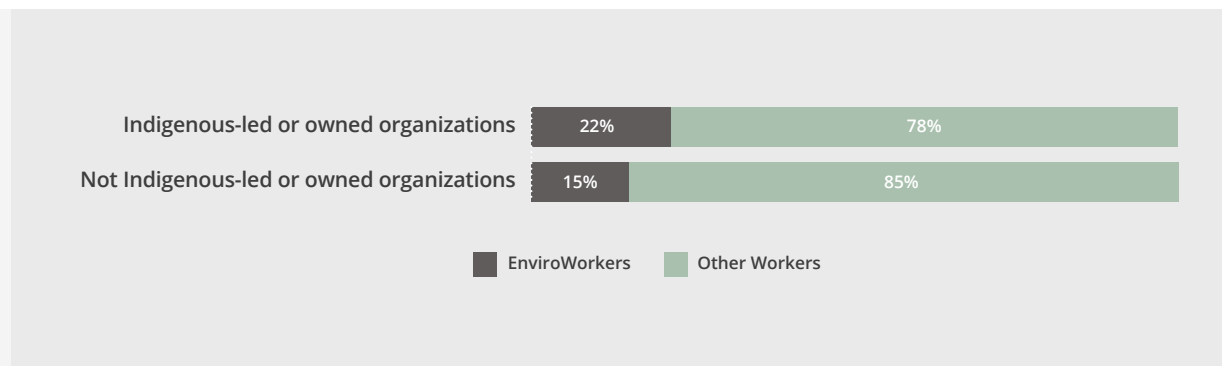
19 Statistics Canada. (2023). Employment and Unemployment Among Persons with Disabilities. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/230830/dq230830a-eng.htm>

SPOTLIGHT: WORKFORCE TRENDS IN INDIGENOUS-LED OR INDIGENOUS OWNED ORGANIZATIONS

Of the 904 employers responding to our survey, 224 (or 25%) identified their organization as being Indigenous-led or owned. These employers represented 3,797 environmental workers within their organization. Employers representing Indigenous-led or owned organizations reported 7% more environmental employees than organizations which were not Indigenous-led or owned. See Figure 14.

Figure 14

Proportion of Environmental Workers across Indigenous-led Organizations and Not Indigenous-led Organizations



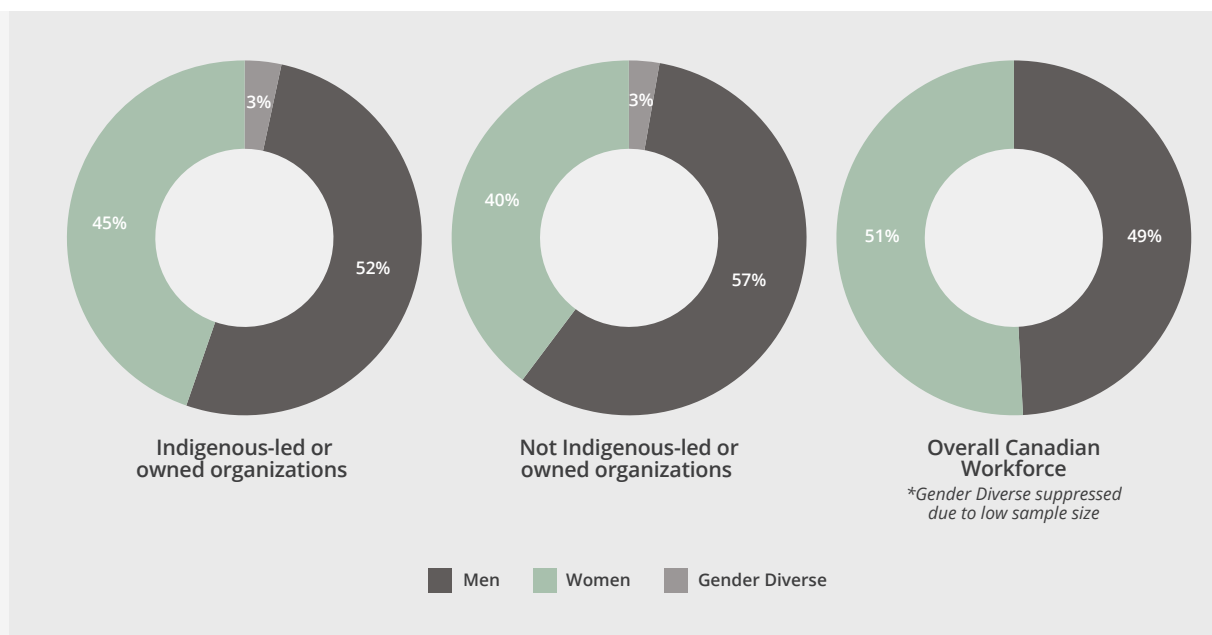
Notable differences are also observed across age, gender, and identities of environmental employees represented by indigenous-led organizations compared to other organizations.

In comparison to organizations which are not Indigenous-led or owned, employers belonging to Indigenous-led organizations see a slightly more balanced gender distribution of female (45%) and male (52%) environmental employees. While this gender distribution is closer the overall Canadian workforce, a higher proportion of men are employed as environmental workers across both Indigenous-led and not Indigenous-led organizations.²⁰ See Figure 15.

²⁰ Statistics Canada, Table 98-10-0485-01 Labour force status by age and gender: Canada, provinces and territories, census divisions and census subdivisions. In 2021 Census data, individuals in the category “non-binary persons” are distributed into the other two gender categories to protect identity due to small sample size.

Figure 15

Gender representation of environmental workers across Indigenous-led or owned organizations, organizations that are not Indigenous-led or owned, and Canada's workforce.²¹



Demographic differences emerge when age distribution across environmental organizations is further examined. The core working population of environmental workers (aged 25-54) is comparable across Indigenous-led or owned organizations and those that are not (64% vs. 69%, respectively).

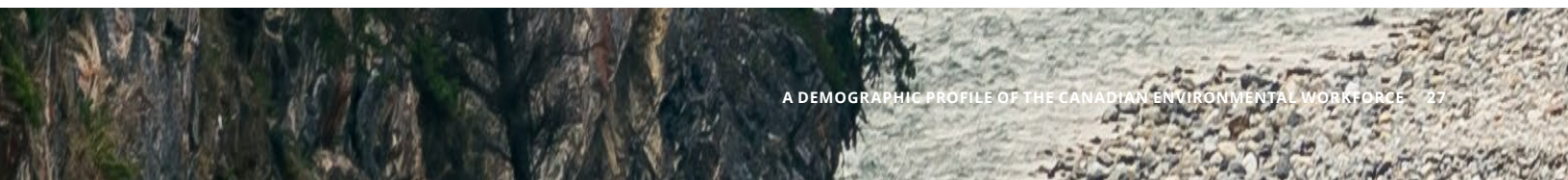
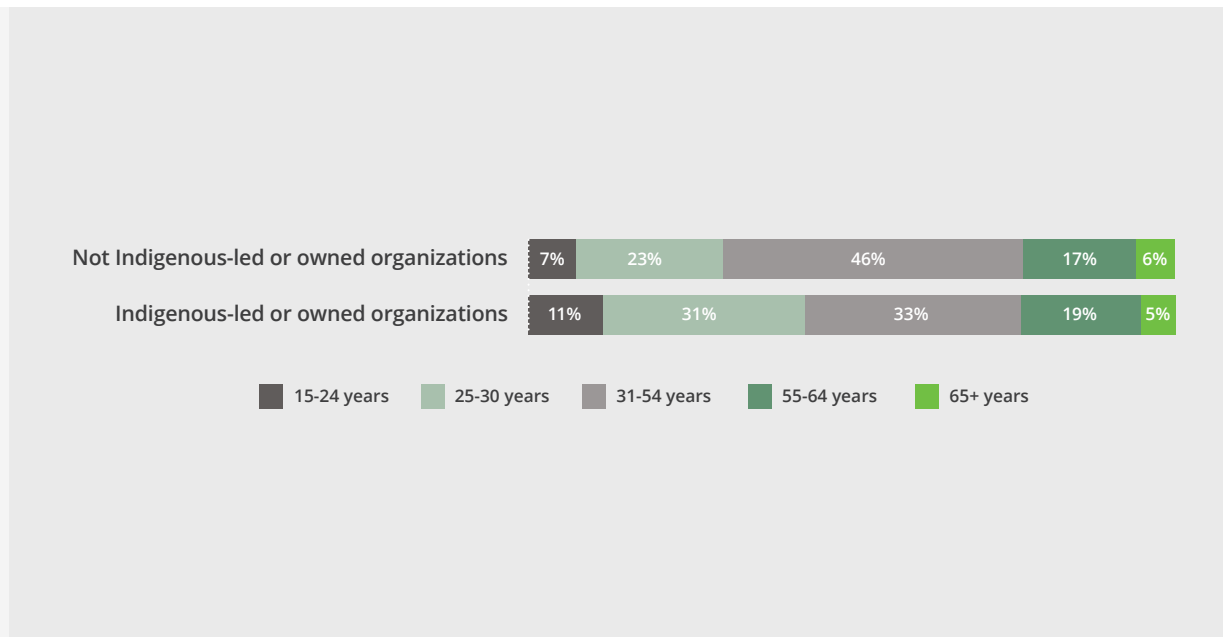
The proportion of environmental employees aged 15-24 years (11%) in Indigenous-led or owned organization are in closer representation to Canada's overall workforce (14%). Environmental workers over the age of 65 remain underrepresented relative to the overall Canadian workforce across both Indigenous-led or owned organizations and those that are not.²² **See Figure 16.**

21, 21 Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0485-01 Labour force status by age and gender: Canada, provinces and territories, census divisions and census subdivisions



Figure 16

Age Representation of Environmental Workers Across Indigenous-led Organizations and Not Indigenous-led Organizations

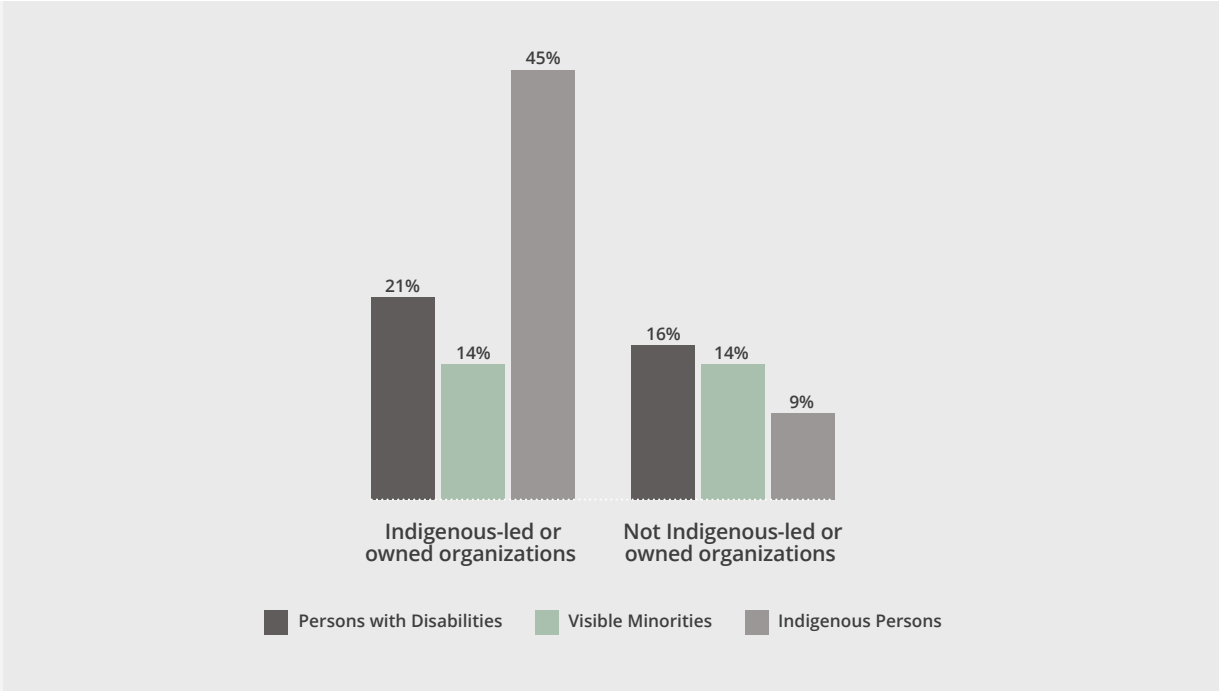




In comparison to organizations that are not Indigenous-led or owned, environmental workers in firms which are Indigenous-led are more likely to be identified as persons with disabilities (↑15%). The number of Indigenous environmental workers in Indigenous-led or owned organizations was five times higher (↑36%) than organizations that are not. This means that nearly half of environmental employees working for Indigenous-led or owned organizations were identified as Indigenous in this survey. **See Figure 17.**

Figure 17

Representation of Identities among Environmental Workers Across Indigenous-led Organizations and not Indigenous-led Organizations



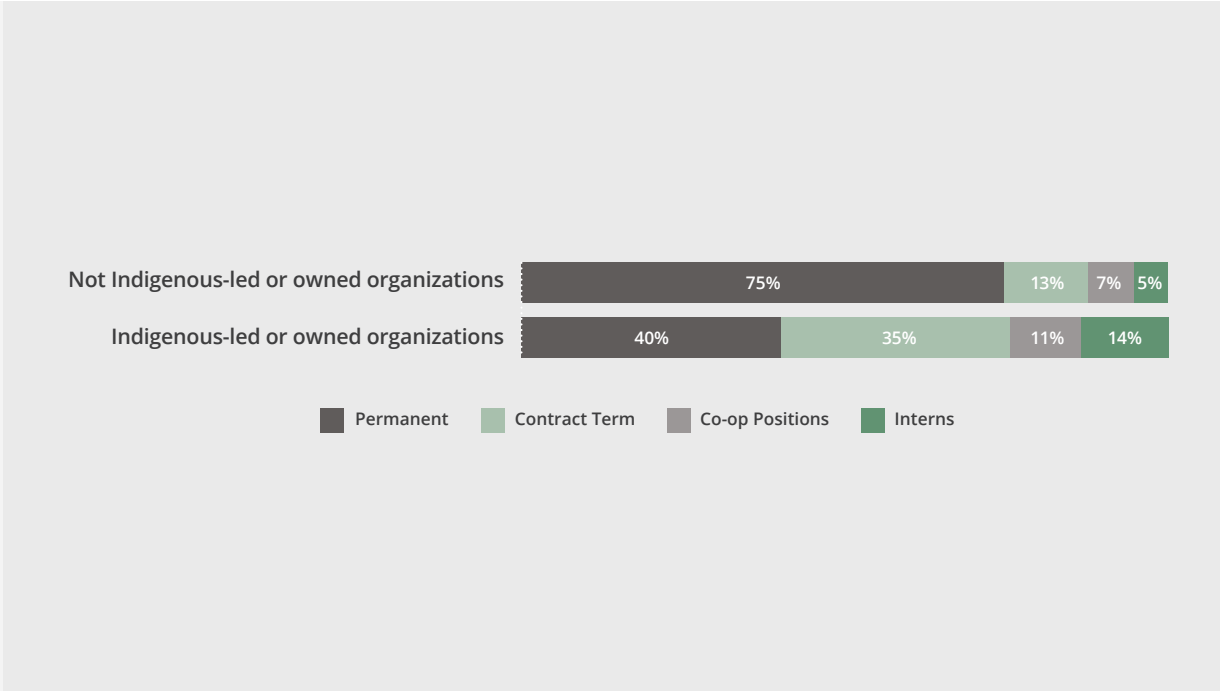


A lower proportion of environmental employees, less than half (40%) of Indigenous-led or owned organizations were reported to hold a permanent position at their job. In comparison, 75% of environmental employees in organizations that are not Indigenous-led or owned were reported to hold a permanent position. **See Figure 18.**

In contrast, Indigenous led or owned organizations had a higher ratio of environmental employees engaged in other contract types than not Indigenous-led organizations.

Figure 18

Work Type Among Environmental Workers Across Indigenous-led Organizations and not Indigenous-led Organizations



FROM DATA TO ACTION: BRIDGING GAPS IN THE PATHWAY TO A DIVERSE TALENT POOL

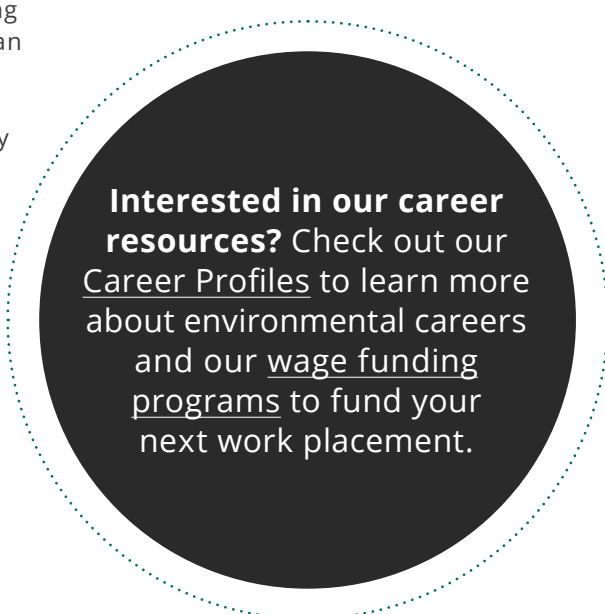
Canada's environmental workers are diverse and while many of our findings reflect trends also seen in the overall Canadian workforce, this report also highlights opportunities to address emerging labour shortages caused by an aging workforce and the expansion of the environmental sector as the green transition accelerates. Gaining a better understanding of demographic trends and gaps across the environmental workforce is key to engaging and supporting underrepresented groups on the road to building a resilient green economy.

PIVOTING TO A GREENER ECONOMY: ACTIONABLE STEPS TOWARDS INCLUSIVE HIRING PRACTICES

Engage and Educate Young Canadians on Opportunities in the Environmental Workforce

This report highlights the increasing importance of encouraging youth to pursue environmental careers. With the core working age group (25-54 years) currently comprising the majority of the environmental workforce and a lower proportion of youth, it will likely become increasingly difficult to meet the workforce demand due to retirements in the coming decades, creating greater competition for skilled talent among industry. From increased access to resources to hands-on experience in environmental roles, many opportunities exist to encourage youth to pursue environmental careers, especially in groups that lack equitable representation across the workforce.

Research shows that providing experiential, culturally relevant learning opportunities to youth increased their interest in pursuing a career within the field and allowed them to make connections between the skills they already have and their applications to a future career.²³ Integrating career preparation into educational programming can also be effective in increasing the both the capacity and willingness of youth to pursue training and post-secondary education.²⁴ Resources developed by organizations such as Canada Youth Works, Youth Green Network, and our work at ECO Canada help provide career information, mentorship, and wage subsidies for youth interested in further exploring the environmental sector as a career path.



Interested in our career resources? Check out our [Career Profiles](#) to learn more about environmental careers and our [wage funding programs](#) to fund your next work placement.

²³ Collins, M. A., Totino, J., Hartry, A., Romero, V. F., Pedrosa, R., & Nava, R. (2020). [Service-Learning as a Lever to Support STEM Engagement for Underrepresented Youth](#). *Journal of Experiential Education*, 43(1), 55-70.

²⁴ Lindstrom, L., Lind, J., Beno, C., Gee, K. A., & Hirano, K. (2022). [Career and College Readiness for Underserved Youth: Educator and Youth Perspectives](#). *Youth & Society*, 54(2), 221-239.

Support Environmental Employment in Indigenous-led or Owned Organizations

Survey findings show that while Indigenous-led or owned organizations have a more diverse environmental workforce, a lower proportion of these positions are permanent. Building the capacity of Indigenous organizations and ensuring that resources are accessible to these employers may help provide stable, meaningful employment within these organizations and support inclusive hiring practices. Organizations offering general and specialized services to Indigenous businesses exist across Canada, such as the Jobs and Growth Fund offered by the federal government, which covers up to 100% of project costs of Indigenous-led organizations and the work of not-for-profit organizations such as Community Futures Network of Canada.^{25,26}

However, ensuring equitable access to these programs and minimizing the barriers that Indigenous employers or business owners face is a key component of program uptake. A 2022 report²⁷ by the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs provides 26 recommendations to alleviate barriers to development in Indigenous communities across Canada, including:

- Greater transparency around the decision-making processes in funding programs, including the Jobs and Growth Fund;
- Ensure existing funding mechanisms, economic programs, and other supports are designed to account for the impacts of remoteness and that remote and Northern communities have equal access to these opportunities;
- Increase access to flexible and stable capital in Indigenous communities;
- Commit to awarding at least 5% of high-value federal contracts to Indigenous businesses.

Beyond this, the Standing Committee and other organizations across Canada emphasize the importance of reducing systemic barriers, including restoring the power Indigenous communities lost to centuries of colonial laws and policies.²⁸ Underlying socio-economic disparities make it difficult, if not impossible, for many Indigenous communities and persons to meaningfully participate in the Canadian economy, which in turn limits opportunities for both Indigenous employers and employees. In addition to strengthening the programs and benefits available to Indigenous-led or owned organizations, addressing the barriers faced by the Indigenous Peoples is the cornerstone of economic reconciliation in Canada.²⁹

25 Community Futures Network of Canada. 2024. [Homepage](#).

26 Government of Canada. 2024. [Jobs and Growth Fund](#).

27 Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs. 2022. [Barriers to Economic Development in Indigenous Communities](#).

28 Yellow Head Institute. 2021. [Cash Back](#).

29 Bank of Canada. 2023. [An Overview of the Indigenous Economy in Canada](#).

Integrate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Practices into the Workplace

Building an inclusive workplace culture allows employers to tap into under-utilized talent pools and attract a skilled workforce.

Effective DEI practices include, but are not limited to:^{30,31}

- Understanding your biases
- Identifying gaps in your organization through the collection of inclusion data such as employee feedback sessions and anonymous surveys, which will also allow progress to be tracked when addressing these barriers
- Investing time into building a DEI Strategy for your organization
- Developing and practicing inclusive recruitment and hiring processes
- Prioritizing continuous learning through employee training opportunities such as workshops, speaker series, and access to resources



30 CIPD. 2019. *Building inclusive workplaces*.

31 McKinsey. 2023. *A DEI strategy framework for success*.

APPENDIX A: PROFILE OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

We had a diverse group of **904** employers respond to our surveys.

Figure A1

Survey Respondents by Region

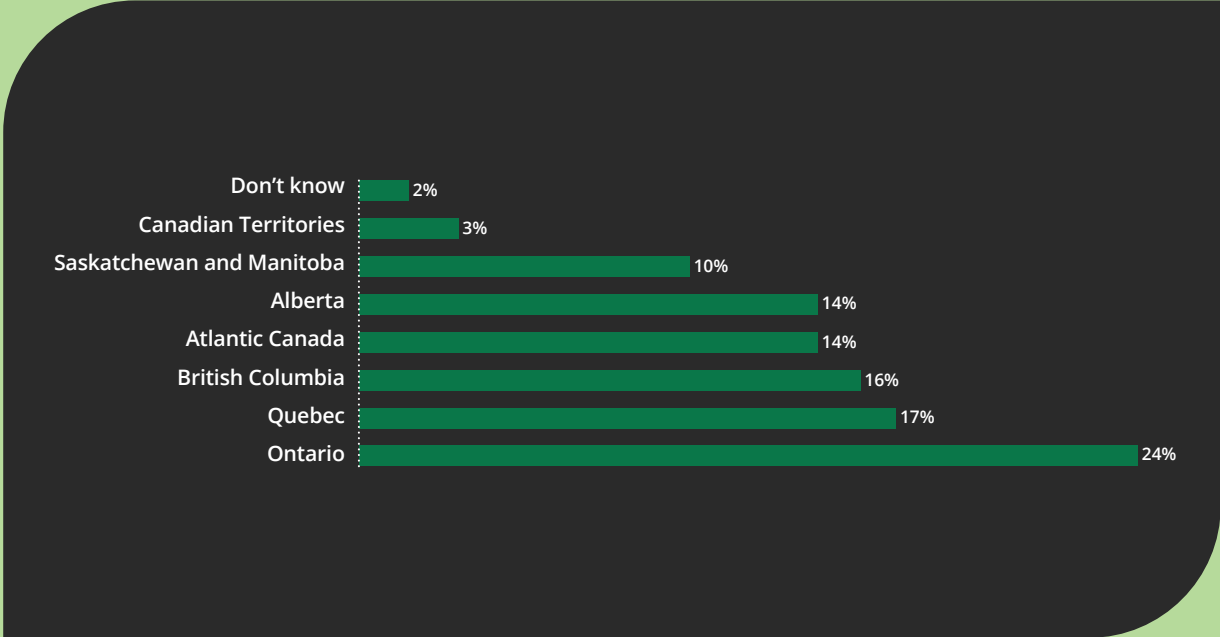


Figure A2

Survey Respondents by Size of Organization

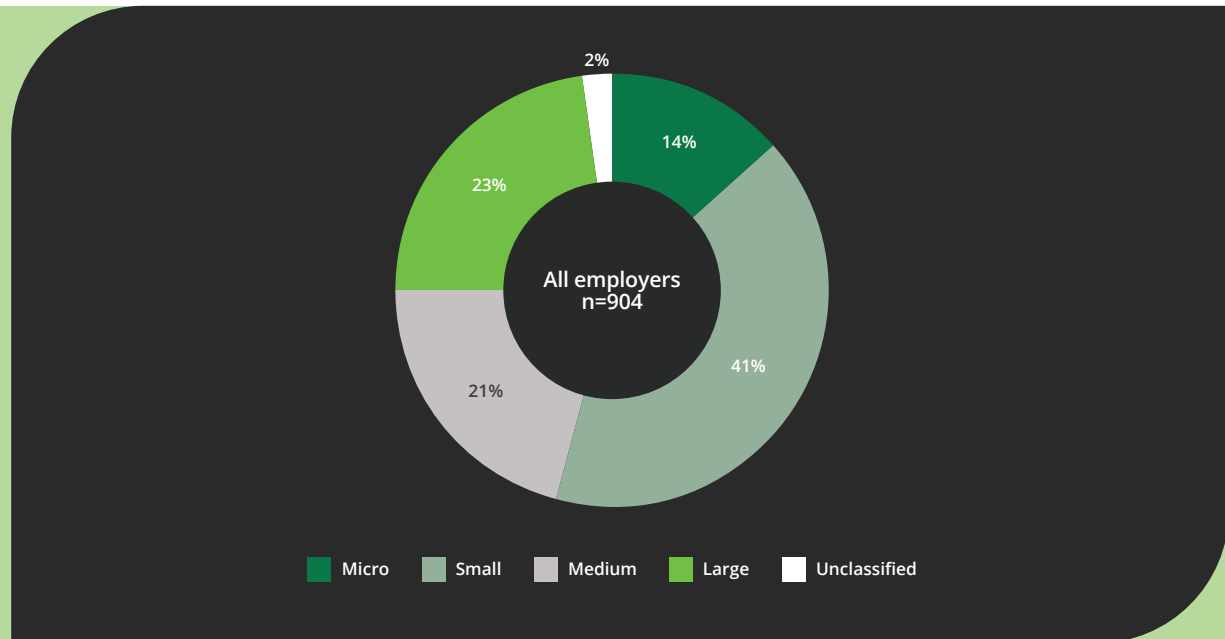


Figure A3

Survey Respondents by Organization Type

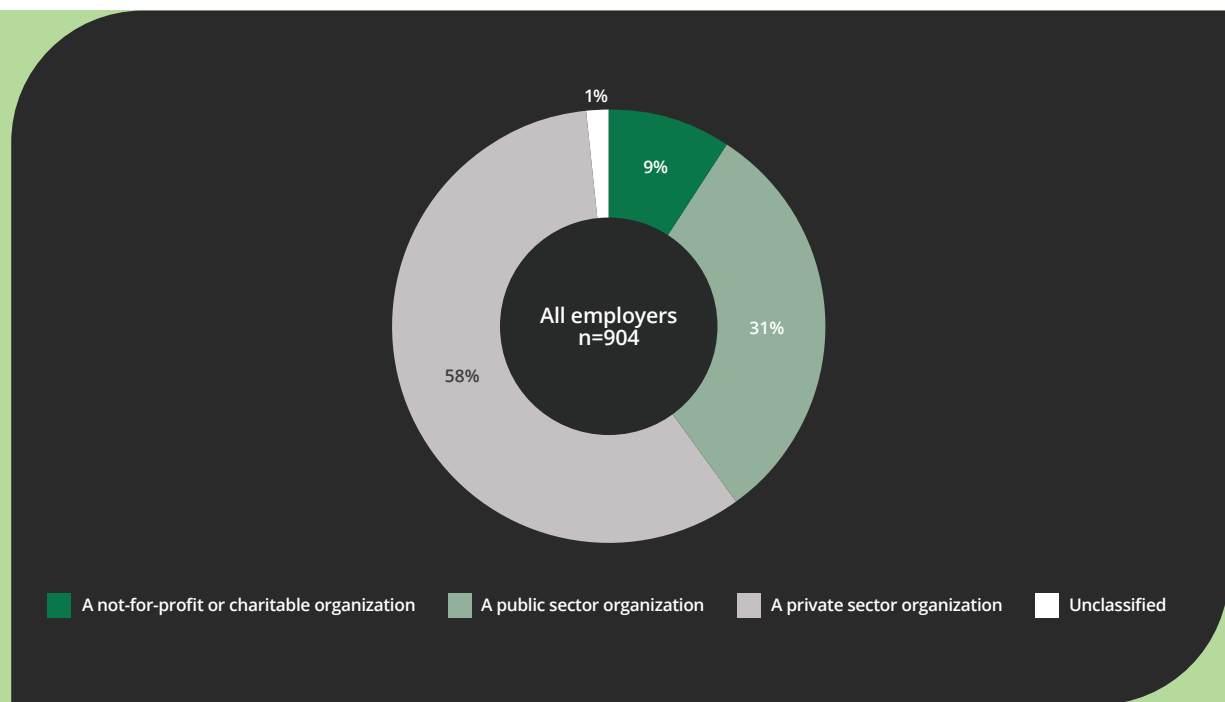


Figure A4

Proportion of Environmental and Non-Environmental Workers

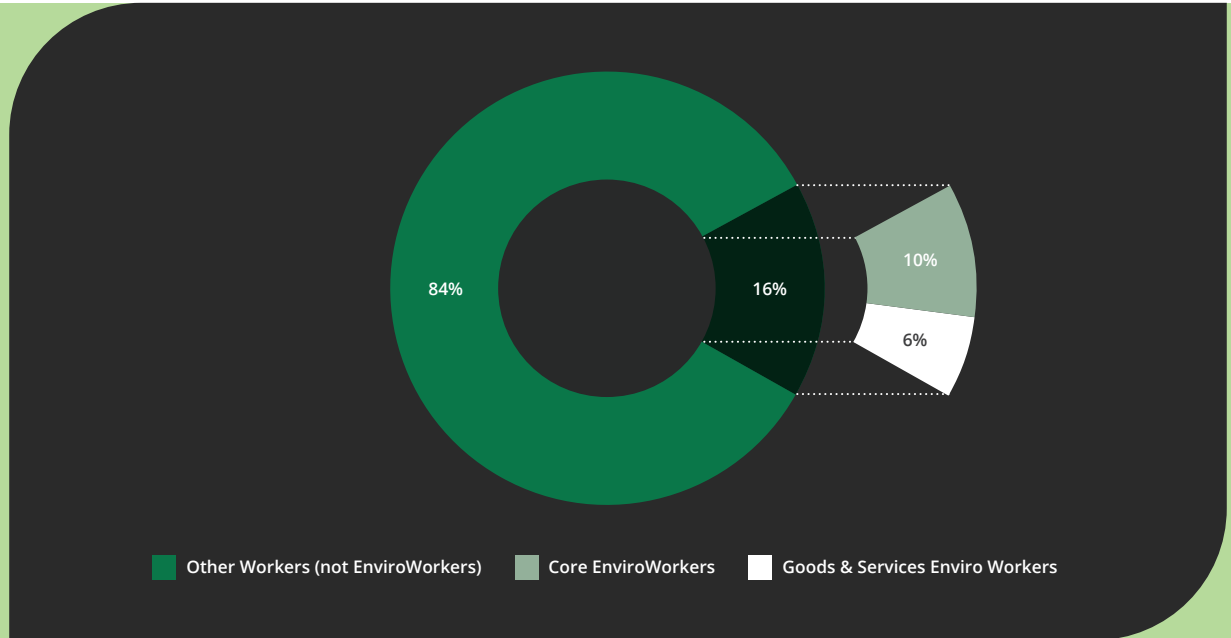


Figure A5

Number of Represented Environmental Workers by Industry

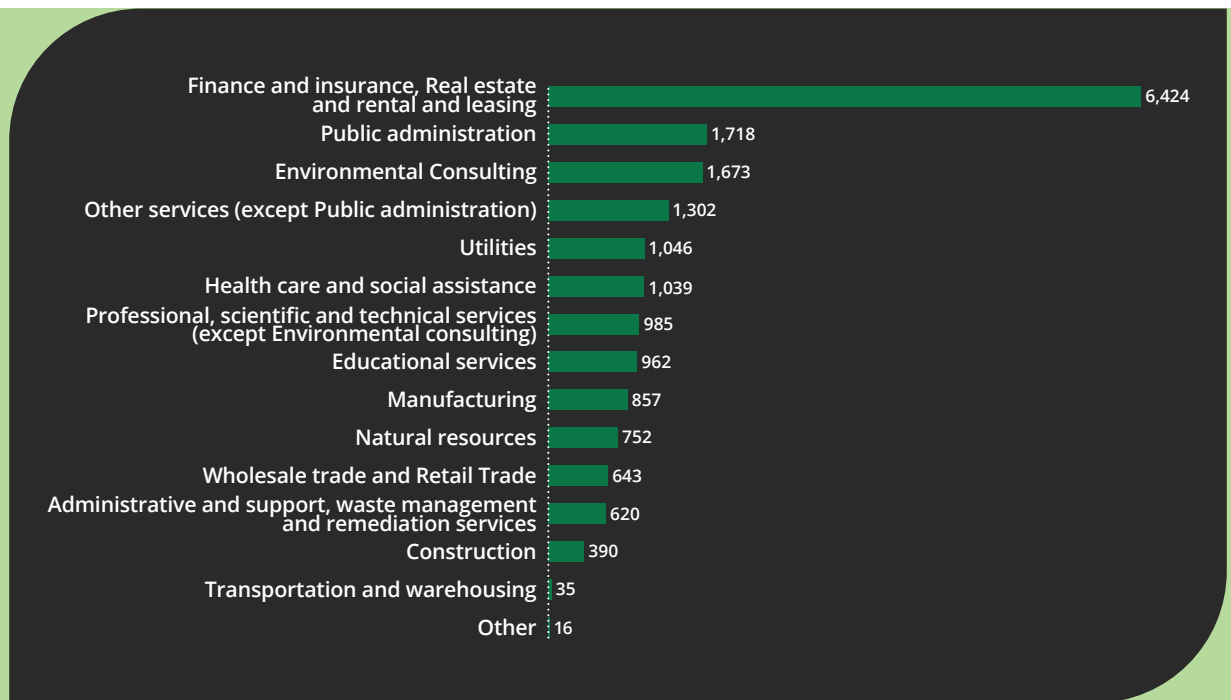
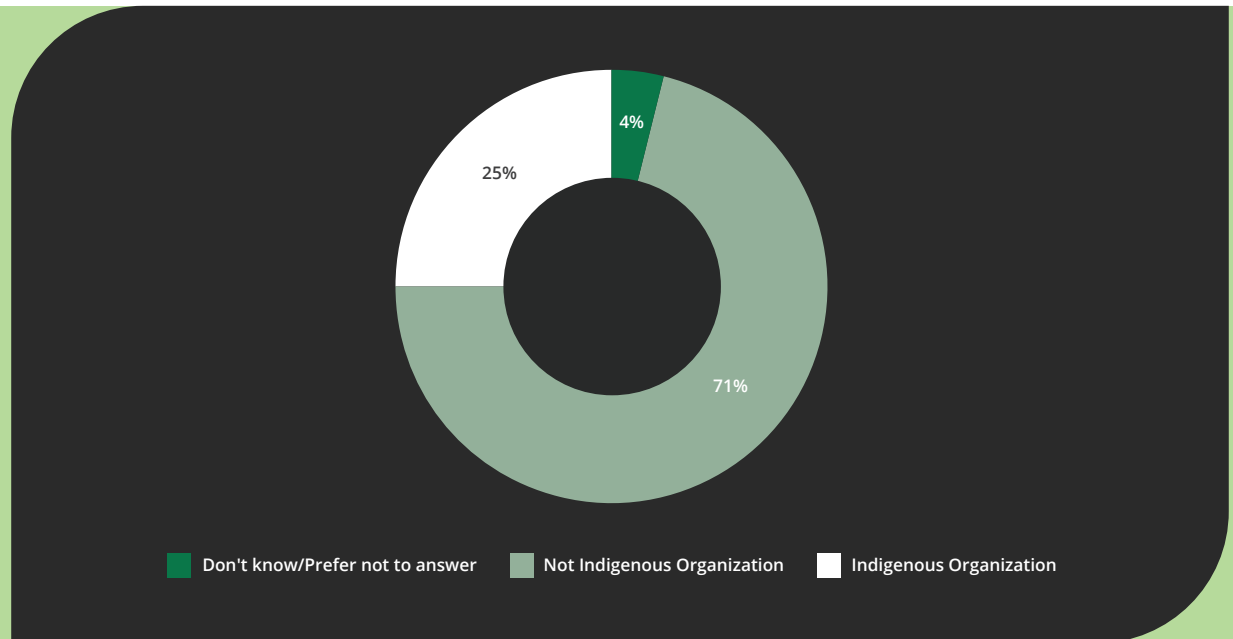


Figure A6

Proportion of Indigenous-led or Owned Organizations



APPENDIX B: CANADA'S ENVIRONMENTAL GOODS AND SERVICES SECTOR

The **environmental goods and services sector (EGSS)** consists of a heterogeneous set of producers of goods and services aiming at the protection of the environment and the management of natural resources. **Environmental goods and services** are products manufactured or services rendered for the main purpose of:

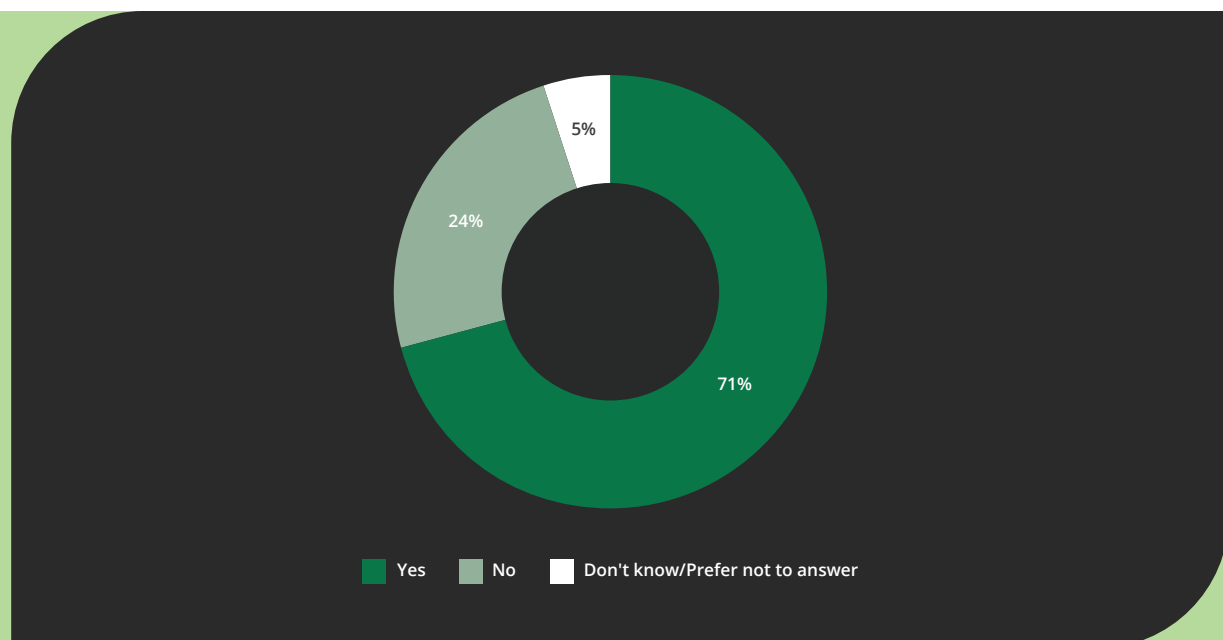
- Preventing, treating, minimizing, or eliminating pollution, degradation or natural resources depletion
- repairing damage to air, water, waste, noise, biodiversity and landscapes
- carrying out other activities such as measurement, monitoring, research and development, education, training, information and communication-related to environmental protection or resource management

Survey results show age and gender representation across the environmental goods and services workforce to be reflective of the overall Canadian workforce.³²

In our survey of Canada's employers, 642 employers identified as Environmental goods and services sector organizations. These employers represented about 114,310 total employees and 19,360 environmental employees.

Figure B1

Proportion of respondents that identified their organization as part of the EGSS

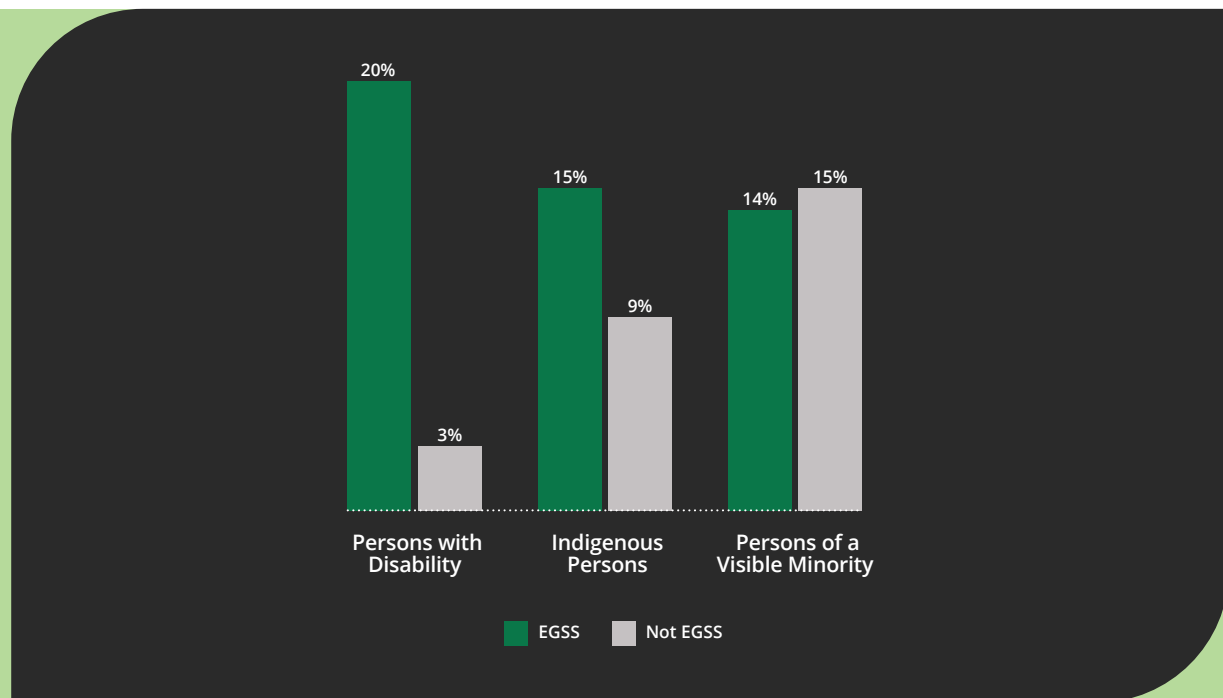


³² Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0485-01 Labour force status by age and gender: Canada, provinces and territories, census divisions and census subdivisions

In comparison to organizations that do not identify as part of the EGSS, environmental goods and service producers who completed our survey show a more diverse workforce.³³ This discrepancy was most profound in the representation of persons with disabilities in the workforce, with EGSS organizations employing 17% more persons with disabilities than their counterpart. These trends are observed to a lesser extent with both Indigenous Peoples being more represented within the EGSS (**Figure 15**).

Figure B2

Representation of Indigenous persons, visible minorities, and persons with disabilities across EGSS organizations and non-EGSS organizations



³³ Note that this observation may be in part due to a smaller sample of non-EGSS organizations

APPENDIX C: STUDY METHODOLOGY

This study was designed to collect data to gain a better understanding of the demographic composition of Canada's environmental workforce.

DATA COLLECTION

A national survey for environmental employers in all regions and industries across Canada was developed and disseminated with the assistance of Leger Advertising, using online and telephone data collection.³⁴

Prior to data collection, Leger completed a pre-test/soft launch from April 3rd to April 6th, 2023. The full launch was on April 11th and the survey remained open until June 4, 2023. The survey was advertised and administered in both English and French.

As with all surveys, participation was depended on people being aware of the survey and dedicating time to complete it. To maximize participation, the survey was promoted through multiple channels over a two-month period in 2023 and incentives were offered for completion.

The survey was promoted through the following:

- ECO Canada's membership base
- Leger's LEO (LegerOpinion.com) panel of Canadians
- Leger telephone surveys of Canadian employers using a purchased list of employers and their associated industry (NAICS) codes
- Partner environmental industry associations
- Social media
- Paid outreach from national, third-party human resource organizations

Employers were asked to describe up to two (2) occupations for which they employ the most significant number of environmental workers, including information on job titles and an outline of the role. ECO Canada used the descriptions and information collected to classify the responses into defined environmental occupations and industry sectors.

³⁴ The survey targeted employers who identified their organization as environmental or recognized that they employ environmental workers. Employees were defined as environmental workers if they contributed to environmental protection, preservation or sustainability, were required to have environmental knowledge, skills or training, or were employed by environmental goods and services organizations.

DATA CLEANING AND ANALYSIS

The data was thoroughly checked, and suspicious respondents were flagged but kept in the database:

- Possible duplicate respondent based on draw information given – same name and/or email address,
- Suspect name and/or company's name,
- Suspicious verbatim responses to open-ended questions,
- Identical answers across verbatims.

Across online survey links, telephone outreach, and Leger's Panel (LEO) a total of **904 survey responses** were recorded.





CONTACT US

...

ECO Canada
Suite 400, 105 12 Avenue SE
Calgary, Alberta T2G 1A1

P : 1-800-890-1924
E : research@eco.ca
W : eco.ca

We are located in the heart of Calgary, Alberta, and have representatives located in Vancouver, Edmonton, Windsor and Halifax.

Visit our website or contact us for more information.



@ecocanada