



## The Construction Industry:

A large workforce.  
A lot of questions.



One solution:

## The Labour Market Information Program

**Q** Why does a multi-billion dollar industry, one that represents almost 12 per cent of Canada's GDP, and employs one out of every 20 Canadians, need a Labour Market Information program?

**A** The Construction Sector Council's Labour Market Information program is aimed at answering three questions: what skills are needed, how many workers are needed and how to find them.

These questions are particularly difficult to answer in the construction industry because of the distinctive relationship between workers and their employers. In many industries, employers hire workers to meet the demands of the business cycle, usually on a long-term basis. But in the construction industry, employers are continuously hiring, even when the economy is on a downswing. This is because construction work is always temporary, sometimes lasting an hour or two, sometimes one or two years at a single construction site. Also, there are no construction "jobs" in the sense that the hours worked by a certain trade at a certain date don't always add up to a "full-time" job on a yearly basis. A thousand-hour construction job could be half a year's work for one person or a week's work for 25 people.

The cyclical nature of construction work also makes it particularly vulnerable to the boom and bust cycles of business in general. Labour market information can play an important role in cushioning these cycles for the construction workforce as a whole.

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**Q** How will a Labour Market Information program help with these challenges?

**A** Information is the best way for industry to respond to human resource challenges.

A well-structured LMI program allows all the stakeholders in the construction industry—from buyers of construction and individual employers to labour groups—to make decisions with a good sense of what's ahead.

In the short term, information allows them to respond quickly, before more serious problems occur. In the medium to long term, it allows stakeholders and governments to make the kinds of policy changes that will resolve serious issues, such as labour shortages, long before they occur.

They can foresee demand levels, assess how easily the labour supply will adjust to that demand, and estimate how tight labour market conditions are likely to be. This is especially important when:

- employers bid on additional work
- union locals receive a request for travel cards from another local, or
- buyers of construction decide on the time schedule of a potential major project



The Construction Sector Council (CSC) is a national organization committed to the development of a highly skilled workforce—one that will support the needs of the construction industry in Canada both now and well into the future. Created in April 2001, it is a partnership between labour, business, and government. At the heart of CSC's mandate is the need to address human resource issues through partnerships within the construction industry.

## Q What are the benefits of the program to the industry?

A The main goal of the LMI program is to increase the productivity of the construction industry over the long term, by:

- maintaining an experienced workforce
- attracting experienced workers back to the industry
- adjusting the flow of new apprentices to meet industry needs, so that fewer apprentices need to leave for lack of work
- recruiting qualified new apprentices by offering more stable employment

The LMI program will generate a wealth of information, organized by province and territory, by construction sector, and by trade. Some information will be updated quarterly; some on a yearly basis.

Some of the products and services to come out of the program will include:

- annual investment forecasts
- annual labour demand forecasts
- annual labour supply forecasts

The Construction Sector Council's LMI program represents a new chapter in human resource planning for the construction industry. For more information on this vital program, visit [www.csc-ca.org](http://www.csc-ca.org), or contact us at:

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- labour supply research
- annual labour requirement assessment
- an annual labour market outlook report
- quarterly national and provincial/territorial labour market bulletins
- large project impact analyses
- an annual regional outlook conference
- an annual national outlook conference
- a career opportunities information portal
- a web-based delivery system

## Q Where will the information come from for the LMI program?

A Although the information generated through the program will come from a wide variety of sources, it will be housed in a single, central location, for easy access and quick updating. This ensures that industry stakeholders have access to the latest information available, and that the data is consistent from region-to-region and from one province/territory to another.

One of the main goals of the LMI program is to connect as many sources of information as possible, and also to reflect the unique perspective of each region, sector, and stakeholder group. In order to do this, the program will create new information, collect

information from existing sources, and refine information generated by the regions, focus groups, and industry stakeholders. Information will come from:

- industry and government representatives
- the LMI regional network—including labour/management/owners associations from all provinces and territories, and relevant provincial/territorial government departments or agencies
- a national owners committee including buyers of construction
- large project lists—through cooperative agreements with appropriate organizations in each province/territory
- focus groups with key stakeholders on subjects that require additional information to enhance industry understanding and knowledge
- traditional statistical sources, such as Census data

## Q Who will the program benefit?

A The LMI program is designed to meet the different needs of many audiences, including:

- unemployed construction workers
- employers
- graduate vocational students
- labour groups
- buyers of construction
- health and safety organizations
- government economic agencies
- federal/provincial/territorial governments

