



Building bright futures

Electricity Sector
Labour Market Information Project:

Atlantic Provinces Region





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Summary of Findings

The Electricity Sector Council (ESC) is undertaking research to explore the sector's labour market needs. This report is based on the data collected for the 2008 Labour Market Information Project, commissioned by the ESC in partnership with Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC). The report is a regional analysis, which provides a comparison of the regional data with the national data. It presents some of the key metrics that employers in Canada's electricity sector can use to better plan for future human resource needs. A regional perspective is helpful for employers to more accurately gauge their position in relation to the national average.

The report is not meant to be representative of all establishments in the region, but rather of the establishments that provided data for the 2008 ESC Employer Survey.

Below are some of the key findings from the regional analysis.

Key Findings

- The Oil & Gas industry represents a significantly more relevant source of competition for employees among Atlantic province employers (57%) than it does nationally (25%);
- Employers in the Atlantic provinces reported a higher proportion of summer students and co-op students, but a lower proportion of apprentices, compared with the national averages. However, employers in the region reported having not hired any interns in 2007;
- The age profile of employees in the Atlantic establishments shows a slightly higher than average percentage of employee in the 35 to 54 age cohort (70% compared with 66%);
- Employers in the region reported a smaller percent of retirements in 2006 in proportion to employment, but predicted much higher than average proportions in 2009 and 2012; and
- Reported vacancy rates were similar for most occupational groups, with the exception of Engineers and Technicians/Technologists, where respondents reported an 8% vacancy rate compared with 3% nationally.

Readers are reminded that the findings in this report reflect only the data provided by the participating companies listed above. Given that data from Nova Scotia Power, one of the region's largest employers in the electricity sector, was not included, caution should be taken in considering the data as wholly representative of the region, particularly with reference to demand in labour.

Section 1: Background

1.1 Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of the Labour Market Information Project was to assist the Electricity Sector Council in understanding the current and future supply and demand of labour in the electricity sector.

One outcome of the presentation of results to the project Steering Committee in June was a desire to undertake further analysis of the results on a regional scale. A regional analysis of key metrics is essential to assist companies within each region to better assess their strengths and weaknesses, and better understand the opportunities and threats they may face in light of the projected labour shortages.

Based on previous studies conducted for the ESC, regional breakdowns are as follows:

- British Columbia
- Alberta
- Saskatchewan and Manitoba
- Ontario
- Quebec
- Atlantic Provinces

Each regional report includes background information on the Human Resource context within each region, in addition to the analysis of key metrics presented in the Labour Market Information project report. Contained in this report is an analysis of the Atlantic region.

1.2 Research Considerations

The primary reason the regional analysis was not included in the main project report was that for many questions, the number of companies responding was very few. The result was that 1) the data could not be considered as representative of the entire universe, and 2) the anonymity of the respondents would be compromised. In keeping with research integrity, the following report does not claim to be representative of all establishments in the electricity sector, operating in Atlantic Canada. Rather, this report provides respondents with a picture of where they stand in relation to the national average.

Section 2: Context

2.1 Overall Trends in the Region

Traditionally, the main industries in Atlantic Canada that have accounted for the vast majority of employment are forestry, mining, fishing, and agri-food production. Recently, Atlantic Canada has been enjoying growth in the Oil & Gas industry. Revenue from Oil & Gas in the region has grown significantly since 1998. According to Statistics Canada, revenue increased from \$1.9 billion in 1998 to \$9.6 billion in 2005. This represents an increase of 405% over 7 years, at an average rate of 58% per year.

According to the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, the region has an exceptionally diversified energy generating capacity¹. The agency’s publication on Energy in Atlantic Canada states that “With hydro, nuclear, oil, coal, diesel and natural gas powered generating stations, as well as wind energy, the region boasts among the highest per capita electricity production ratios in the world”².

Furthermore, according to the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council, the region’s energy sector has enjoyed rapid growth over the past decade and is seeing increased contributions to both total outputs and international exports³. However, the Council points out, continued growth in energy production, while promising, is further dependent on two main drivers of energy development: demand in the Northeastern U.S., and environment pressures for cleaner energy. These two factors will be significant in determining the region’s approach to long-term energy investments⁴.

2.2 Employment and Unemployment in the Region

The Atlantic region has a long history of recording higher than average unemployment rates, and lower than average employment rates. The same holds true today. As the table below illustrates, each of the provinces in the Atlantic region follows this trend.

Exhibit 2.1: Employment and Unemployment Rates as of August, 2008					
	National	PEI	Nova Scotia	New Brunswick	NFLD/ Labrador
Employment	63.4%	61.3%	58.7%	59.2%	51.4%
Unemployment	6.1%	10.4%	8.0%	8.4%	13.8%

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, August, 2008

2.3 Profile of Companies in the Region

The Atlantic region currently has 7,270 employees working in NAICS 2211. This accounts for approximately 8% of total NAICS 2211 employment.

The majority of employees working in NAICS 2211 in Atlantic Canada are employed by integrated establishments. According to the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), the main players in the electricity sector in the region are: Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro, Newfoundland Power, NB Power, Emera, and Maritime Electric⁵ - all of which are considered integrated. However, windpower is also growing in the region. According to the ACOA, PEI has Canada’s first wind-hydrogen project. The multi-faceted initiative bridges wind energy and hydrogen technologies to create and offer clean, sustainable energy options. Additionally, Nova Scotia’s Pubnico Point wind farm is the first in the province and has 17 wind turbines, each with a generating capacity of 1,800 kilowatts. In New

¹ http://www2.acoa-apec.ca/NR/rdonlyres/D3AB8963-0900-44D5-9A91-6E4C618E7ABF/0/Energy_EN.pdf

² *ibid.*

³ <http://www.apec-econ.ca/publications.asp?ID=152>

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ http://www2.acoa-apec.ca/NR/rdonlyres/D3AB8963-0900-44D5-9A91-6E4C618E7ABF/0/Energy_EN.pdf

Brunswick, it is estimated that approximately 400 megawatts will be added to the mix of electricity through wind energy⁶.

Given these shifts to the electricity landscape in Atlantic Canada, it is likely that employment in renewables will increase and comprise a larger percent of NAICS 2211 employment in the region.

Section 3: Employment Profile

This section outlines the general employment profile of respondents to the 2008 ESC Employer Survey, and provides a comparison between the national profile and the regional profile.

3.1 Support and Non-Support Staff

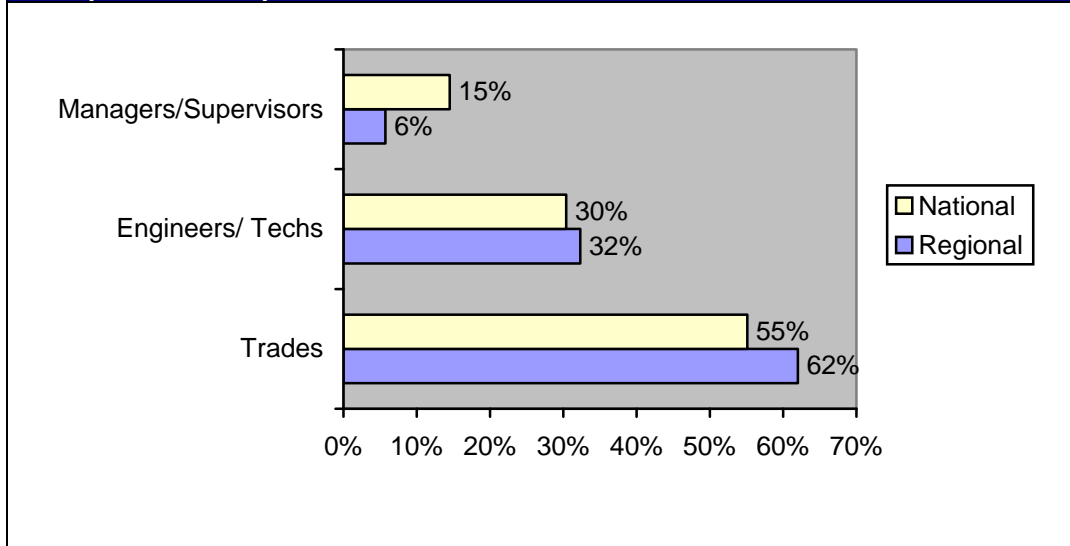
In total, employers in the Atlantic provinces reported employing 2,194 non-support staff. According to total employment reported for the region, non-support staff account for 53% of employment in the electricity sector in the region. This proportion is lower than the national industry average, where approximately 64% of the sector's workforce is classified as non-support.

3.2 Non-Support Employees by Major Occupational Group

The following graph presents the percent of non-support employees represented in each major occupational group, compared with the industry averages.

⁶ *ibid.*

Exhibit 3.1: Percent of Non-Support Employees Represented in Each Major Occupational Group



Source: 2008 ESC Employer Survey (n=87 nationally, n=7 regionally)

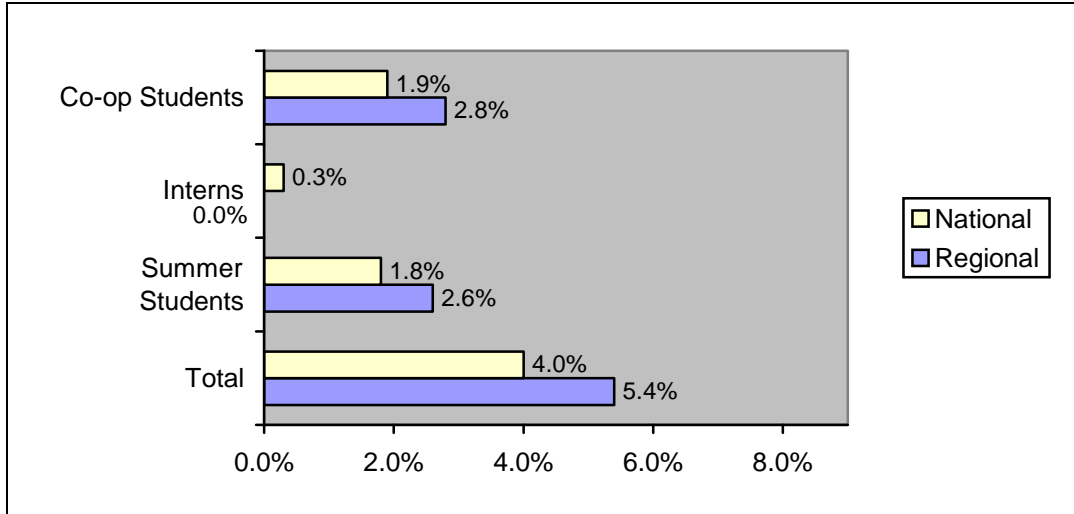
The data in the table above suggests that there are fewer Managers, as a percent of total employment, among employers in the Atlantic provinces (6%) than there are nationally (15%). Further to this, there is a slightly higher percent of Engineers and Techs regionally (32% compared to 30% nationally), and a more marked higher percent of Trades people (62% compared to 55% nationally). Speculation as to reasons for the large difference in the percent of Managers and Supervisors might include that larger companies are more likely to have more ‘front line’ and technical staff, with more of these employees reporting to a single manager. Among the 7 respondents from the Atlantic region, 4 were large employers and 3 were small (57% large). By comparison, in across all respondents, 23 were classified as large and 64 as small (26% large). The higher proportion of large companies represented at the regional level could possibly account for the difference in the percent of managers and supervisors.

Section 4: Supply of Workers

4.1 Co-op Students, Summer Students, and Interns

There were a total of 2,818 co-op students, interns, and summer students taken on in 2007 across the country by employers in the electricity sector. Regionally, there were 224. The following graph details the percent of total employment that each group represents.

Exhibit 4.1: Co-op Students, Interns, and Summer Students’ Percent Representation of all Employment



Source: 2008 ESC Employer Survey (n=81)

Note: Percentages are based on all employment. The 'n' includes all companies who provided data for at least one of the categories, and the percentages are calculated based on total employment of these companies.

The data presented in the table above show that establishments in the Atlantic provinces hired overall more co-op and summer students, as a percent of total employment, when compared with the national figures. Again, one possible partial explanation for this could be that the region had a higher proportion of large employers responding. Large employers tend to have more resources available to hire co-op student, interns, and summer students, than do smaller employers.

4.2 Supply of Engineers

As reported in the main LMI report, the number of graduates from engineer programs in Canadian universities has increased overall by 7% between 2003 and 2005. However, the number of students enrolled in electrical engineering programs decreased by 10% over this same time period.

Reproduced below are the national figures of the number of enrolments and graduates in 2003 and 2005 by program, and the percent change of each.

Exhibit 4.2: Student Enrolment and Graduates in Engineering Programs (National Figures)			
Year	2003	2005	% change
Number of Students Enrolled			
Electrical Engineering	17,382	15,693	-10%
Mechanical Engineering	14,742	15,600	6%
Civil Engineering	7,929	9,186	14%
Chemical Engineering	5,124	5,631	9%
Materials Engineering	504	924	83%
Systems Engineering	666	657	-1%
Nuclear Engineering	21	177	743%
Total	46,368	47,868	3%
Number of Graduates/ Completers			
Electrical Engineering	3,702	3,849	4%
Mechanical Engineering	2,979	3,849	29%
Civil Engineering	1,518	1,710	13%
Chemical Engineering	1,083	1,092	1%
Materials Engineering	120	144	20%
Systems Engineering	153	141	-8%
Nuclear Engineering	3	3	0%
Total	9,558	10,212	7%

Source: Statistics Canada PSIS Data

The regional figures are presented in the table below. Overall, there was a decrease in enrolment in engineering programs but an increase in graduates.

Exhibit 4.3: Student Enrolment and Graduates in Engineering Programs (Regional Figures)			
Year	2003	2005	% change
Number of Students Enrolled			
Electrical Engineering	894	666	-26%
Mechanical Engineering	960	960	0%
Civil Engineering	711	843	19%
Chemical Engineering	291	306	5%
Materials Engineering	0	0	0%
Systems Engineering	0	0	0%
Nuclear Engineering	0	0	0%
Total	2,856	2,775	-3%
Number of Graduates/ Completers			
Electrical Engineering	192	237	23%
Mechanical Engineering	195	210	8%
Civil Engineering	129	135	5%
Chemical Engineering	72	66	-8%
Materials Engineering	0	0	0%
Systems Engineering	0	0	0%
Nuclear Engineering	0	0	0%
Total	588	648	10%

Source: Statistics Canada PSIS Data

Of particular note, is that enrolment in Electrical Engineering programs decreased by an amazing 26% between 2003 and 2005, whereas graduation increased by 23% over this same time period. This is particularly noteworthy, because it indicated that 4 years from 2005 (i.e. currently) there will be fewer graduates of Electrical Engineering programs in the Atlantic provinces than there were in previous years. All other engineering programs saw marginal increases or stayed the same, with the exception of Civil Engineering, which experienced a 19% increase in enrolments.

4.3 Apprentices in Key Trades

Employers were asked to report on the number of apprentices they had taken on in 2007 for four key trades in the electricity sector. The following exhibit presents a comparison of regional data with national averages.

Exhibit 4.2: Apprentices Employed in Key Trades

	Total Employees in Occupation at Responding Companies		Apprentices Taken on in 2007		Apprentices as % of Total Employees in Occupation	
	National	Regional	National	Regional	National	Regional
Power System Electricians	4,103	230	829	17	20.2%	7.4%
Power Line and Cable Workers	5,660	474	1,033	59	18.3%	12.4%
Power Systems Operators	746	78	234	16	31.4%	20.5%
Power Station Operators	1,319	5	237	0	18.0%	0%
Total	11,828	732	2,333	92	19.7%	12.6%

Source: 2008 ESC Employer Survey (n=60 nationally, n=7 regionally)

The above data suggests that fewer apprentices were taken on in Atlantic provinces for each key occupation, compared with industry averages. In order to better understand the reasons behind the lower percent hiring of apprentices, further research needs to be done into the apprenticeship system in Atlantic Canada.

However, a review of the Registered Apprenticeship Information System data on apprenticeship enrollments and completions in Atlantic provinces for the above mentioned occupations showed the following trends:

- Enrollments declined from 310 in 2003 to 225 in 2005 – a 27% decrease
- Completions increased from 20 in 2003 to 55 in 2005 – a 175% increase

NOTE: these trends are based on the following 6 apprenticeship programs:

- Cableman
- Power Electrician
- Power System Electrician
- Power Maintenance Electrician
- Power System Operator
- Powerline Technician

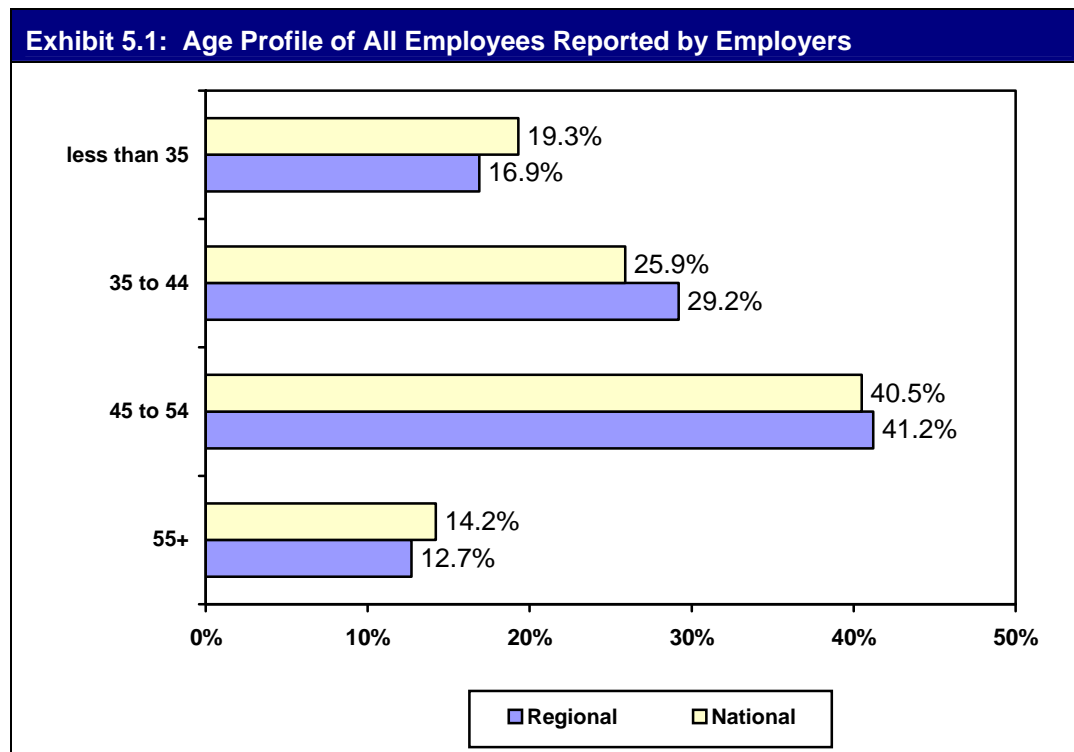
Across the country, registration in the above specified apprenticeship programs increased from 1,855 in 2003 to 2,215 in 2005, representing a 19.4% increase.

Generally, apprentices are taken on when they have not yet completed their program, as the practical component, and is in partial fulfillment of the apprenticeship certificate. Given that enrolments in the region declined, it is perhaps not surprising that the percent taken on is lower than the national percent.

Section 5: Age and Retirement Trends

5.1 Age of Employees

The graph below provides the age profile, by group, of all employees in the electricity sector, as reported by employers in the 2008 ESC employer survey.



Source: 2008 ESC Employer Survey (n=84, nationally; n=7, regionally)

As the graph suggests, the majority of employees reported on in the Atlantic provinces are between the ages of 45 and 54. The biggest difference between the regional and national figures is in the 35 to 44 age groups, where almost 30% of Atlantic employees are in this cohort compared with 26% nationally. Other than this, most other cohorts show fairly similar percentages between the regional and national data.

5.2 Retirements by major occupational group

Exhibit 5.3 looks at retirements by major occupational group. The exhibit provides the total number of retirements represented as a percent of current employment for the given occupational group.

Exhibit 5.3: Estimated Retirements Reported by Employers by Occupation						
Occupation Group	Retired in 2006		Estimated Retirements in 2009		Estimated Retirements in 2012	
	National	Regional	National	Regional	National	Regional
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Managers	3.6%	4.0%	5.7%	4.0%	8.5%	13.7%
Engineers and Technicians/ Technologists	2.4%	1.1%	4.2%	7.9%	5.3%	9.3%
Trades	1.6%	1.0%	4.1%	6.8%	6.0%	10.4%
Other Critical Key Occupations	4.8%	1.2%	8.2%	7.1%	7.6%	9.5%
Total	2.4%	1.2%	4.7%	7.0%	6.2%	10.2%

Source: 2008 ESC Employer Survey (n=82 nationally, n=7 regionally)

As the exhibit illustrates, overall, retirements at the regional level are expected to be more pronounced in 2009 and 2012, compared with the national levels. While in 2006, actual retirements were fewer at the regional level (1%) than at the national level (2.4%), in 2009 the percentages are predicted to be 7% and 5% respectively. Furthermore, retirements in 2012 are expected to be 6% at the national level and 10% at the regional level. Speculation for this might include that the higher regional percent of employees in Trades occupations compared with Management occupations can result in overall higher predicted retirements. As suggested in the main LMI report, Trades people tend to retire earlier due to the generally more physically demanding nature of the jobs.

5.3 Pension Eligibility

The table below details the percent of employees within each occupational group who were eligible either for their full or partial pension in 2006. Particular caution needs to be taken when considering this data, as only four companies provided data.

Exhibit 5.4: Eligibility for Pension – by Occupation				
Occupation Group	Eligible for Full Pension in 2006		Eligible for Partial Pension in 2006	
	National	Regional	National	Regional
Managers	9.9%	2.4%	36.5%	2.4%
Engineers and Technicians/ Technologists	9.0%	2.4%	32.3%	12.4%
Trades	6.0%	0.5%	32.5%	8.1%
Other Critical Key Occupations	19.3%	0.0%	31.5%	0.0%
Total	8.6%	1.2%	33.0%	9.3%

Source: 2008 ESC Employer Survey (n=49 nationally, n=4 regionally)

The data presented in the exhibit above suggests that a significantly smaller percent of employees in Atlantic Canada were eligible for both full and partial pensions. This was true across all occupational groups. It cannot be determined at this point the reasons for the differences. However, it should be noted that companies can differ greatly with regards to pension policies. Thus, it is possible that the relatively small percentage of employees who were reported as being eligible for their pension is a result of differences in eligibility policies, rules, and regulations.

Section 6: New Hires

6.1 Common sources of Recruitment for New Hires

The figures in this table all need to be considered with caution as the 'n' for each occupational group is between 1 and 5. Nonetheless, the most striking figure is the percent of regional new hires that were hired as recent graduates. Regionally, this figure account for almost 50% of all new hires across all occupational groups.

Exhibit 6.1: Percent of New Hires Recruited from Given Source in 2006 – by Occupation Groups

Occupation Group	Source in Percent											
	Recent Grads		Recent Immigrant		Electricity Related		Non-Electricity Related		No Previous Work Experience		Other	
	National	Regional	National	Regional	National	Regional	National	Regional	National	Regional	National	Regional
Managers	4.1%	100.0%	5.7%	0.0%	62.0%	0.0%	22.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.1%	0.0%
Engineers and Techs	28.6%	53.3%	7.9%	6.7%	32.5%	6.7%	24.5%	33.3%	6.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Trades	18.0%	54.2%	2.4%	0.0%	33.5%	37.5%	37.5%	8.3%	6.5%	0.0%	2.1%	0.0%
Other Critical Occupations	10.4%	11.5%	3.4%	0.0%	24.0%	15.4%	48.3%	73.1%	4.6%	0.0%	9.3%	0.0%
Total	19%	48%	4%	3%	34%	22%	34%	28%	5%	0.0%	3%	0.0%

Source: 2008 ESC Employer Survey, (n=53, national); (n=7, regional)

Some other notable figures include:

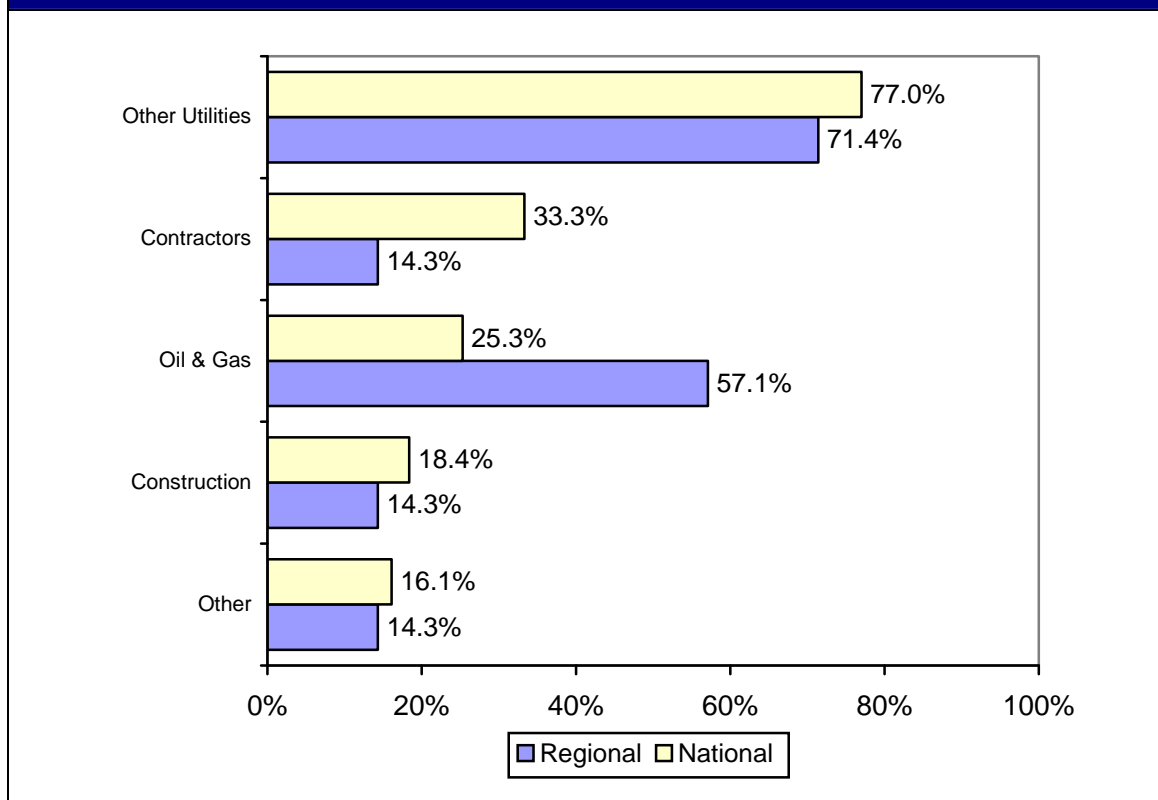
- Regionally, 54% of new hires for trades occupations were recent graduates, compared with only 18% nationally;
- 73% of new hires in 'Other Critical Occupations' were from non-electricity related industries;
- The only occupations for which recent immigrants were hired were Engineers and Technicians/Technologists.

The figures above illustrate that employers in Atlantic provinces tend to hire most of their new recruits as recent graduates. The second most common source of new hires was from non-electricity related sources. However, among the Trades occupations, the second most common source of new hires was from other electricity related industries, which suggests that employers in the Atlantic provinces are likely to resort to poaching their Trades people from other companies (either within the region, or attracting them from other areas of the country).

6.2 Common Sources of Competition for Employees

Employers were asked whether or not the following were sources of competition for employees. The graph illustrates the percent of respondents who felt that the following were sources of competition for employees.

Exhibit 6.2: Sources of Competition for New Hires to the Electricity Sector



Source: 2008 ESC Employer Survey, (n=87; national), (n=7; regional)

Among employers in the Atlantic provinces, 'other utilities' were cited most often as a primary source of competition for new hires. The second most commonly cited source among Atlantic employers was Oil & Gas, at 57%, compared with only 25% at the national level. Given the growing role that Oil & Gas is playing in the region's revenue (as discussed in the first section of this report), these figures are consistent with the region's recent economic trends.

Section 7: Vacancy Rates

7.1 Vacancy Rates Reported

This section outlines the vacancies reported by employers, and the vacancy rates, broken down by occupation and major occupational group.

Exhibit 7.1: Vacancy Rates by Occupational Group

Occupation Group	Vacancies		Currently Employed		Vacancy Rate	
	National	Regional	National	Regional	National	Regional
Managers	132	2	5,941	124	2.2%	1.6%
Engineers and Technicians/ Technologists	405	64	12,466	709	3.1%	8.3%
Trades	821	42	22,599	1361	3.5%	3.0%
Total	1,358	108	41,000	2,194	3.2%	4.7%

Source: 2008 ESC Employer Survey (n=87 nationally, n=7 regionally)

Interestingly, although the region posts higher than average unemployment rates, the figures above show that overall vacancies for non-support occupations in the electricity sector are higher (5%) than the national average (3%). However, closer examination of the data reveals that the major occupational group that brings the regional percentage up is the Engineers and Technicians/Technologists. This group recorded a vacancy rate of over 8%, with Mechanical Techs tipping the scale at an astounding 28%. For the other two non-support major occupational groups, the region reported lower than average vacancies, which is more consistent with the general unemployment rates, when compared with the national average.

These figures suggest that there is a current shortage of Engineers and Technicians in the electricity sector in the Atlantic region.

Section 8: Supply/Demand

The following section outlines the hypothetical labour supply and demand gap. Two scenarios are presented: a low growth and a high growth scenario. The same assumptions were made in these forecast models as were made in the models presented in the main LMI report. Where possible, the assumptions were broken down to the regional level, and applied to each region's supply and demand models. The information used to project growth in demand came from responses to the LMI survey. Demand figures were derived from the percent of reported retirements and projected growth by region. The national separation rate was applied because there was not enough regional information on separation rates to accurately determine the different regional rates. Thus, the national rate was applied. It therefore should be noted that the demand figures are limited to being based entirely on employer responses to the survey.

The supply figures were derived from a combination of employer reported apprenticeships (for the trades, broken down by region), and Statistics Canada's PSIS data for the number of engineers reported to have graduated (broken down by region). Other sources of labour such as immigration were also included. Again, these figures were taken from the main LMI supply/ demand model and had regional weights applied based on Statistics Canada's reported immigration figures.

8.1 Low Growth

The following exhibits present a projected supply-demand gap in the electricity sector, based on low and high growth scenario assumptions.

Exhibit 8.1: Estimated Supply and Demand Gap – Low Growth Scenario Engineers and Other Non-Support Positions		
Group/Period	Annual Estimates	
	2009	2012
Current Total Workforce¹		
Engineers	1,293	1,293
Trades/other non-support	2,410	2,410
Total	3,703	3,703
Estimated Demand – Low Growth Scenario²		
Engineers	102	202
Trades/other nonsupport	190	376
Total	293	578
Estimated Supply³		
Engineers	37	42
Trades/other non-support	19	20
Total	56	62
Supply-Demand Gap⁴ (per year)		
Engineers	(65)	(160)
Trades/other non-support	(172)	(356)
Total	(237)	(516)

- ¹ Total estimated workforce in electrical occupations, 2008 ESC Employer Survey
² No additional employment growth required for demand increases or replacement requirements. Retirements based on organization estimate of likely retirements, not the proportion eligible for retirement.
³ Portion of graduates who secure employment in electricity sector upon graduation as discussed in Section 4 of the main report
⁴ Difference between estimated demand and current education supply capacity

8.2 High Growth

Exhibit 8.2: Estimated Supply and Demand Gap – High Growth Scenario Engineers and Other Non-Support Positions		
Group/Period	Annual Estimates	
	2009	2012
Current Total Workforce¹		
Engineers	1,330	1,388
Trades/other non-support	2,448	2,505
Total	3,778	3,893
Estimated Demand – High Growth Scenario²		
Engineers	128	241
Trades/other nonsupport	220	418
Total	348	659
Estimated Supply³		
Engineers	37	42
Trades/other non-support	19	20
Total	55	62
Supply-Demand Gap⁴ (per year)		
Engineers	(92)	(199)
Trades/other non-support	(201)	(398)
Total	(293)	(597)

- ¹ Total estimated workforce in electrical occupations, 2008 ESC Employer Survey
² No additional employment growth required for demand increases or replacement requirements. Retirements based on organization estimate of likely retirements, not the proportion eligible for retirement.
³ Portion of graduates who secure employment in electricity sector upon graduation as discussed in Section 4 of the main report
⁴ Difference between estimated demand and current education supply capacity

The exhibit below highlights the projected supply-demand gap for 2009 and 2012, based on the high and low growth scenarios. Overall, the gap ranges from 6% to 8% of the current non-support workforce in 2009, and from 14% to 15% of the current non-support workforce in 2012.

The table below presents a comparison of the in the Atlantic provinces with the national projections. The figures are represented as a percent of the workforce.

Exhibit 8.3: Predicted Supply/Demand Gap as a Percent of Employment								
Group	2009				2012			
	Low		High		Low		High	
	National	Regional	National	Regional	National	Regional	National	Regional
Engineers	2.3%	5.0%	4.5%	6.9%	3.7%	12.4%	6.0%	14.3%
Trades/other non-support	4.5%	7.1%	6.5%	8.2%	5.9%	14.8%	8.0%	15.9%
Total	3.8%	6.4%	5.9%	7.8%	5.2%	13.9%	7.4%	15.3%

According to the hypothetical scenarios presented, employers in the Atlantic provinces are predicted to experience more significant supply/demand gaps in both years under both scenarios, as a total and when broken down by occupational group. The biggest difference is recorded in both the low and high growth scenarios for 2012. Readers are reminded however, that these are hypothetical scenarios. They are also reminded that there may be some differences between the provinces. These data are based on the reported figures from employers in region as a whole, and have not been weighted. In addition, readers are reminded that the actual demand figures may be higher than those represented above, given that the projections are limited by the data provided by participating companies. One of the region's largest employers, Nova Scotia Power, was not able to provide data, and thus readers should be aware of this gap.

The actual growth scenarios may further be affected and/or influenced by the changing economic condition. Other factors to consider, which have not been accounted for at the regional level, include the degree to which companies rely on consulting firms or contractors to complete projects. As mentioned in the 2004/2008 Comparative Analysis, large international and multinational engineering consulting companies such as SNC Lavalin play a significant role in the supply of labour for large infrastructure and construction contracts in the country's electricity sector. Thus, readers should also be cognizant of the availability of these workers in their region when interpreting the data, and when planning their human resource strategies.

Conclusion

According to the responses of employers in the Atlantic provinces, the most common source of competition for new hires is other utilities and the oil & gas industry, and most new recruits were hired on as recent graduates. This latter figure is consistent with the figures reported on the number of co-op students and summer students taken on in 2007. According to regional figures, a larger portion of the non-support employment base was comprised of individuals in these two categories, compared with the national figures. In total, co-op students, interns, and summer students made up just over 10% of non-support employment. These two findings suggest that employers in the Atlantic provinces rely more heavily on students, new trainees, and graduates to fill their non-support positions, than on any other source. This practice can be a very effective human resource strategy to ensure a continued stream of new and educated employees.

Additionally, vacancy rates among key non-support occupational groups are overall only slightly higher than the industry average, which is consistent with the higher unemployment rates recorded in the region, as outlined in section 2.2 of this report. Among Trades and Manager positions, the vacancy rates are in fact lower than the industry average. This suggests that relative to industry averages, employers in Atlantic provinces are better able to attract employees to the industry.

Finally, retirements in the region are expected to be more significant than industry averages. Although the 2006 figures were somewhat lower, by 2009 and 2012 regional retirements are expected to outpace industry averages significantly. The projected supply/demand gaps under both the low and high growth scenarios, in both 2009 and 2012 are further reflective of this general trend. Therefore, employers in the region will need to put forth a concerted effort to tap into currently underutilized pools of labour, and continue to take advantage of students and recent graduates both as a source of immediate labour, and as a means of growing their workforce base.

List of Participating Companies

The following companies in the Atlantic provinces participated in the 2008 Electricity Sector Council Employer Survey:

Maritime Electric Company Limited

New Brunswick Power Corporation

Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro

Newfoundland Power Inc.

Atlantic Nuclear Service

Integrity Wind Systems

Deer Lake Power

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