



## **Request for Proposals for Research, Analysis and Discussion Paper on the Nova Scotia Green Jobs Market: Barriers and Potential Solutions**

### 1. Project and needs

Ecology Action Centre seeks a socioeconomic analysis and discussion of barriers and potential solutions to supplying the necessary labour and skills development to transition Nova Scotia's energy system and economy away from fossil fuels, and toward greater energy efficiency and conservation.

This analysis should include:

- A literature review of other studies and reports on the subject with a summary of findings, including an assessment of the number and nature of new jobs to emerge in energy efficiency work on Nova Scotia buildings.
- A mapping of currently available educational and training assets for new and upgrading workers
- An assessment (based on interviews with private sector, municipal, provincial, and academic experts) of what further job skills need to be developed to ensure that new buildings in the province reach a net-zero-energy-ready standard, and that a majority of existing buildings can be retrofitted to reach this standard
- An assessment of the barriers and opportunities to working in energy efficiency jobs for people from equity-deserving communities, and potential pathways toward greater inclusion. This assessment will be based on 1. Interviews with key informants at organizations working on employment issues for equity-deserving groups, including African Nova Scotians, women in the trades, Mi'kmaw workers, newcomers to Canada (including students hoping to stay), 2SLGBTQIA+ workers, and persons with disabilities; and 2. Interviews with employers engaged in energy efficiency work, including retrofits and new builds of all sizes.
- An assessment of needed resources for employers focused on energy efficiency to create and support a safer, more welcoming workplaces for equity-deserving workers.
- Identify a clear pathway to increase training opportunities (including apprenticeship) and graduates for a net-zero economy, as well as opportunities in this transition for Nova Scotians from equity-deserving communities.
- Present findings at net-zero skills workshops for workers, students, and policymakers

Key questions to consider include:

- How many jobs and in what fields will be lost in transitioning to greater energy efficiency and use of renewables?
- How many jobs and in what fields will be gained in the transition?
- What is needed, year by year, in terms of investments to fill labour gaps in meeting goals of the NS Climate Plan?
- What training is needed and how much will it cost?
- How can Nova Scotia ensure that new opportunities are equitably available to newcomers, African Nova Scotians, Mi'kmaq, and women?
- What government and agency partners have a mandate to support access and equity to help sustain this kind of initiative?
- What key initiatives and models exist in other Provinces and Countries that are seeing success?

The Discussion and Analysis paper should be completed by December 15, 2024.

## 2. Background

The Ecology Action Centre's Energy & Climate Team has worked for decades toward improving energy efficiency and grid transformation in Nova Scotia. We were instrumental in the creation of an energy efficiency utility. We have been advocating for renewable energy sources like wind and solar since before the creation of the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act (and its successor, the Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act). Since 2016, we have been urging the province to adopt the federal 2020 building codes on energy efficiency.

In conversations with representatives of the trades in the province, and with elected officials, we often hear of skilled labour shortages. The Construction Association of Nova Scotia estimates a shortage of 3,000 workers to build the number of homes needed to address the need for new housing in this province:

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1.7162973>.

BuildForce Canada further estimates "Nova Scotia's construction industry will need to recruit 10,600 additional workers [by 2030] to keep pace with labour force growth and replace approximately 8,200 retiring workers, or 22% of the current labour force. Many of these hiring requirements may be met by an estimated 7,400 first-time new entrants under the age of 30 from the local population, leaving a gap of about 3,200 workers that will need to be recruited from outside the local construction labour force"

([https://www.buildforce.ca/system/files/forecast\\_summary\\_reports/2024%20NS%20Constr%20Maint%20Looking%20Forward.pdf?language=en](https://www.buildforce.ca/system/files/forecast_summary_reports/2024%20NS%20Constr%20Maint%20Looking%20Forward.pdf?language=en)).



Buildforce Canada notes that despite slowed rates of residential building due to high interest rates, “...overall employment increases on the strength of additional renovation and maintenance related employment, which rises +11% and +14% respectively over the forecast period.”

These estimates however do not address increased demand for trades workers to retrofit old, energy inefficient building stock. We do have a national estimate that across Canada, 309,000 new workers are needed for efficient building retrofits:

<https://www.encycanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Workforce-Development-Placemat-Final.pdf>.

More broadly, Eco Canada estimated in March 2024 that Canada is “expected to need 480,500 new environmental workers by 2033 to keep up with retirements and economic growth.” Nearly 3 of 10 of these openings will be new jobs rather than worker replacement. The need is greatest in professional, scientific, and technical services, (80,400 net job openings), public administration (76,700), construction (47,100), manufacturing (27,300), and educational services (27,300). Eco Canada also finds there are currently 34,920 environmental workers in Nova Scotia, with 11,720 new hires likely by 2033, and 3,190 of those being for newly created jobs.

It is important to note that of 34,600 tradespeople working in Nova Scotia only 5% are women. In 2021, Indigenous workers made up 5% of Nova Scotia's construction workforce. The share of immigrants in this sector's workforce was 9% in 2022, having nearly doubled in the ten years prior.

In 2019, EAC commissioned a Green Jobs report by Gardner Pinfold Consultants Inc.: <https://ecologyaction.ca/green-jobs-report>, which estimated that 15,000 new jobs per year could be created in Nova Scotia by meeting the province's greenhouse gas reduction targets.

Five years later, EAC would like to explore more deeply. What jobs will be most in demand? What skills are currently lacking in the workforce? What training should be provided? And how can new opportunities be used to improve employment rates in equity-seeking communities.

Despite the opportunities being provided by transitioning to a low-carbon economy, we have seen little progress in employment inclusion in the trades for African Nova Scotian, Mi'kmaq, women, and newcomers. And disturbing reports of workplace harassment or even assault facing people from these communities are all too frequent, including YWCA's recent report, Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment in the Skilled Trades in Nova Scotia: <https://www.ywcahalifax.com/skilledtradesreport/>.

### 3. About the Ecology Action Centre

Ecology Action Centre's vision is for a just and vibrant world and respect, belonging and ecological resilience. Our mission is to act as watchdog, convener, mobilizer and incubator. We engage community to create systemic change in the face of urgent, complex environmental issues.

As an organization, we are creative, resilient, fierce and caring. We value relationships. We act with integrity. Founded in 1971, EAC focuses on showcasing alternatives, broadening and deepening engagement, and influencing decision-makers for just, transformational change.

### 4. Budget for this work

\$27,500 + HST

### 5. Preferred Experience

This work requires experience in socioeconomic analysis, policy planning, and work with equity-seeking communities.

Please submit your proposal in writing to Chris Benjamin, Senior Energy Coordinator at [chris.benjamin@ecologyaction.ca](mailto:chris.benjamin@ecologyaction.ca) by June 21, 2024. Please feel free to connect ahead of time with any questions.



