

# DIVERSITY WITHIN CANADA'S GREEN WORKFORCE

Representation of Indigenous persons, persons with disabilities, and racialized communities<sup>1</sup>, is key to increasing productivity, driving employee engagement and promoting innovation. Studies highlighting the benefits of having more representation are numerous and embracing diversity could help the environmental sector bridge the gap between supply and demand of workers over the coming years.

The federal government has recognized the imbalances that exist within organizations across Canada, prompting programs to remove barriers for historically marginalized groups and change representation across corporate boards and in senior management. Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada's 50-30 challenge aims to increase corporate diversity by improving access to positions of influence within organizations for equity-deserving groups – gender parity (50% women or non-binary persons) and significant representation (30% of underrepresented persons). Such initiatives are not only beneficial for environmental workers, but they also foster an organizational culture that attracts talent, improves employee retention and strengthens market penetration.<sup>2</sup>

## OVERALL

Organizations can take advantage of diversity within Canada's green workforce to overcome hiring challenges in today's competitive labour market. Across the 600 employers who responded to our survey, 408 shared information on their environmental workers' identities.

**Of the 46,558 environmental workers employed by these companies:**



**6% are Indigenous persons** vs 4.3% of Canada's entire labour force population<sup>3</sup>

**4% are Persons with disabilities**



**18% are Visible minorities** vs 21.2% of Canada's entire labour force population<sup>4</sup>

## FOOTNOTES & REFERENCES

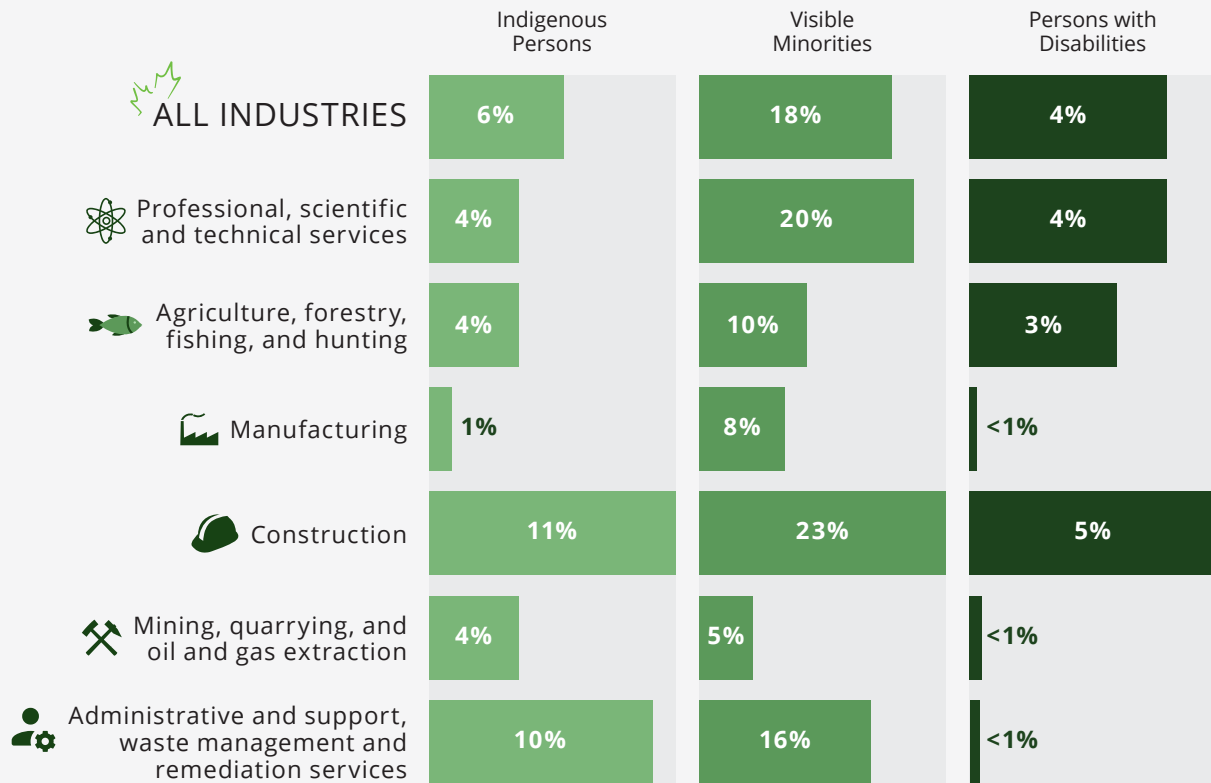
[1] Racialized minorities is comparable to the term visible minorities used by Statistics Canada

[2] *The 50 - 30 challenge: Your diversity advantage*. Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. Retrieved from [www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/icgc.nsf/eng/07706.html#Benefits](http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/icgc.nsf/eng/07706.html#Benefits)

[3] *Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016268*. Government of Canada, Statistics Canada. Retrieved from [www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/catalogue/98-400-X2016268](http://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/catalogue/98-400-X2016268)

[4] *Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016268*. Government of Canada, Statistics Canada. Retrieved from [www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/catalogue/98-400-X2016268](http://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/catalogue/98-400-X2016268)

## BY INDUSTRY



Survey results show a few industries with a notably more diverse environmental workforce than others. For example, **construction employers reported that 10.7%, 4.9%, and 23.2% of their environmental workforce were Indigenous persons, persons with disabilities and visible minorities**, respectively—considerably higher than other notable industries.

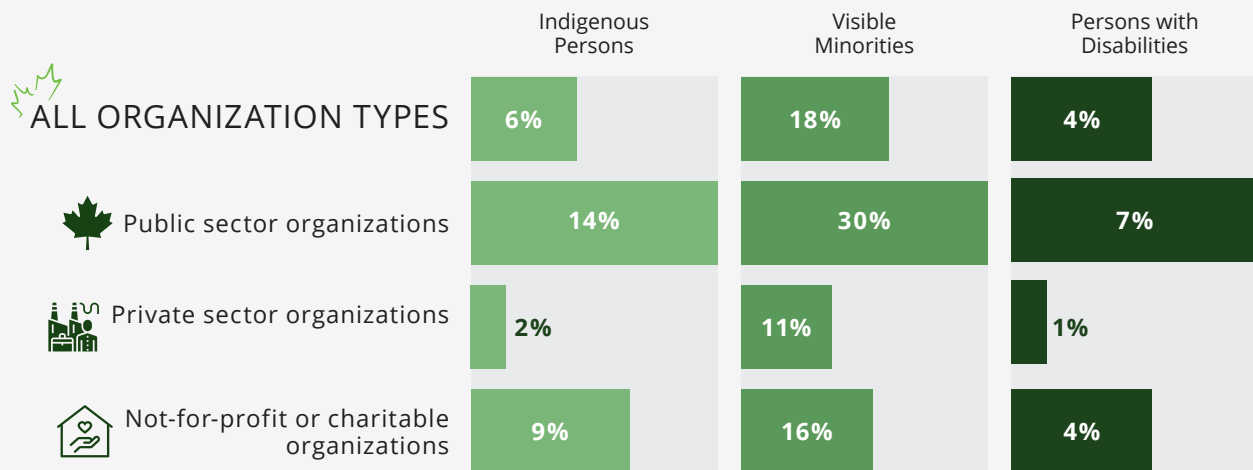


Construction and Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services respondents identified **the largest percentage of Indigenous persons, with 10.7% and 10.2%, respectively**. This is significantly larger than all industries at 6.2%.

Manufacturing, administrative and support, waste management and remediation services, and Mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction had a **lower than average (3.5%) percentage of persons with disabilities, with <1% within each industry**.

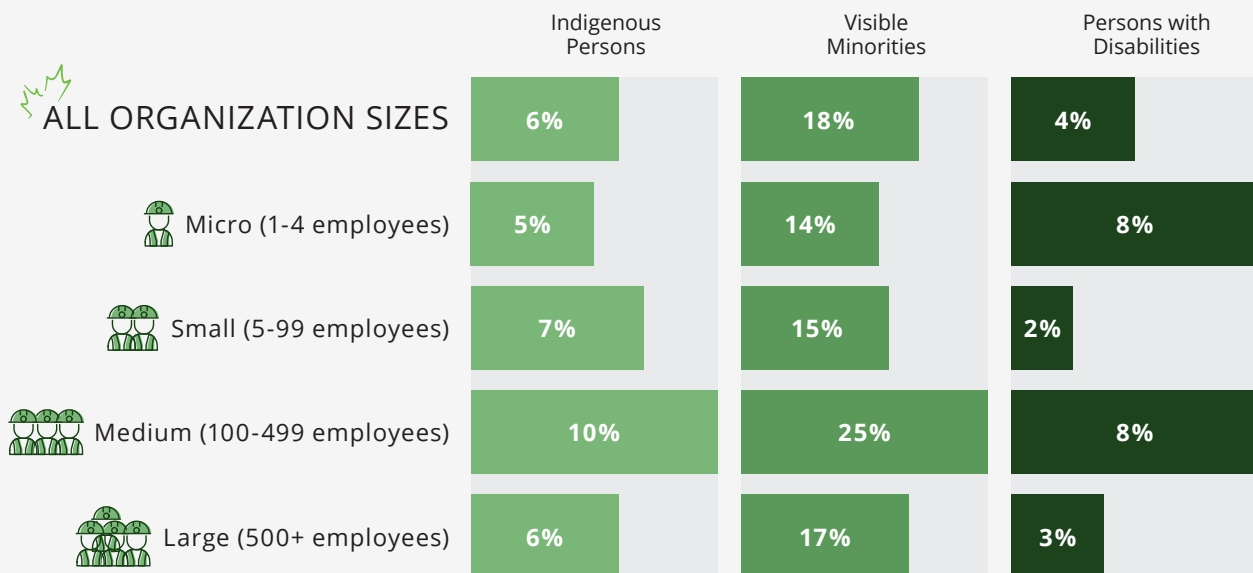


## BY ORGANIZATION TYPE



Based on organization type, the public sector **appears to have an above-average representation of Indigenous persons, persons with disabilities and visible minorities at 13.9%, 7.4% and 30.4%, respectively.** Indigenous representation is also high among the environmental workers we surveyed across not-for-profit or charitable sector organizations.

## BY ORGANIZATION SIZE



Based on organization size, **medium-sized companies have above-average representation of Indigenous persons, persons with disabilities and visible minorities at 10.4%, 7.6% and 25.2%, respectively.**

## SUMMARY

Differences in diversity are commonly observed across organizations based on their industry, organization type, and organization size. By embracing diversity, employers can bring forth new ideas and approaches that may have been previously overlooked. Employee perspectives are shaped by lived experiences and can lead to unique solutions when brought together. However, organizations may require flexibility in traditional hiring practices to increase representation for groups like persons with disabilities and racialized minorities.

Indigenous persons represent the fastest growing population in Canada, and Indigenous inclusion within the environmental sector will be vital if Canada is to reach its green targets. While some efforts are being made to increase Indigenous inclusion,<sup>5</sup> many barriers to employment for Indigenous persons are still in place. Establishing meaningful relationships takes time and hiring practices may need to become more flexible to recognize the wealth of Traditional Knowledge and experience those Indigenous persons can bring to the workforce.<sup>6</sup>

Visible minorities have played a vital part in the economic growth of Canada and have been growing steadily since the 1981 Census. While immigration from non-European countries has contributed to this growth, in 2016, three out of ten individuals who identified as a visible minority were born in Canada.<sup>7</sup> As the job market continues to transform with the exponential rise of automation, demand for skilled workers will continue to rise, and attracting qualified candidates will be a priority for the country.

To minimize barriers experienced by persons with disabilities, the Government of Canada introduced in 2019 the Accessible Canada Act,<sup>8</sup> and the Sectoral Initiatives Program.<sup>9</sup> These programs were prompted by the findings of the 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability, that 59% of working-age adults with disabilities were employed compared to 80% of those without disabilities.<sup>10</sup>

Programs such as Environmental Employability Pathways for Youth Facing Barriers seek to help underrepresented groups gain meaningful employment in the environmental sector. The Immigrant Bridging program aims to help newcomers to Canada find opportunities that reflect their previous skills and experience abroad. BEAHR Indigenous Training provides hands-on, culturally relevant environmental training based on Traditional Knowledge and western science, which further develops the skillset of Indigenous persons. Through the effective implementation of these programs, Canada can address workforce challenges, overcome skills shortages, and realize its economic potential.

## FOOTNOTES & REFERENCES

[5] *Government of Canada announces \$340 million to support indigenous-led conservation*. Canada.ca. Retrieved from [www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/08/government-of-canada-announces-340-million-to-support-indigenous-led-conservation.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/08/government-of-canada-announces-340-million-to-support-indigenous-led-conservation.html)

[6] *Widening the circle for Indigenous People Landing Page*. Deloitte Canada. (2017, January 16). Retrieved from [www2.deloitte.com/ca/en/pages/about-deloitte/articles/widening-the-circle-for-aboriginal-people.html](http://www2.deloitte.com/ca/en/pages/about-deloitte/articles/widening-the-circle-for-aboriginal-people.html)

[7] *Dictionary, Census of Population, 2016*. Census Government of Canada, Statistics Canada. (2017, August 2). Dictionary, 2016. Retrieved March 14, 2022, from [www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/index-eng.cfm](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/index-eng.cfm)

[8] *Summary of the Accessible Canada Act*. Canada.ca. Retrieved from [www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/accessible-people-disabilities/act-summary.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/accessible-people-disabilities/act-summary.html)

[9] *Government of Canada invests in training for persons with disabilities to create a more inclusive workforce and stronger economy - Canada*. Retrieved from [www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/accessible-people-disabilities/act-summary.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/accessible-people-disabilities/act-summary.html)

[10] *Data - Canada.ca*. Retrieved from [www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/accessible-people-disabilities/act-summary.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/accessible-people-disabilities/act-summary.html)

