

# Careers in Sustainability

Current Job Trends  
and Future Growth



ECO CANADA

# About the Study

In Winter 2013, ECO Canada interviewed 658 Canadian organizations. Excluding sustainability consulting firms,

- **37%** had employees working in environmental, social or economic sustainability
- **22%** used a corporate sustainability policy to govern their core business functions
- **57%** of organizations with sustainability professionals incorporated their sustainability teams into more than one business unit or department

# Overview

This research uncovered new insights on Canadian careers in sustainability, including:

**Where the jobs are** – top employers and demand by province

**What it takes to get hired** – required skills, education and experience

**Who works in the sector** – characteristics of the sustainability workforce

**How viable these careers will be** – typical salaries and future job growth



# Canada's Sustainability Workforce

Definition of Sustainability Professionals:

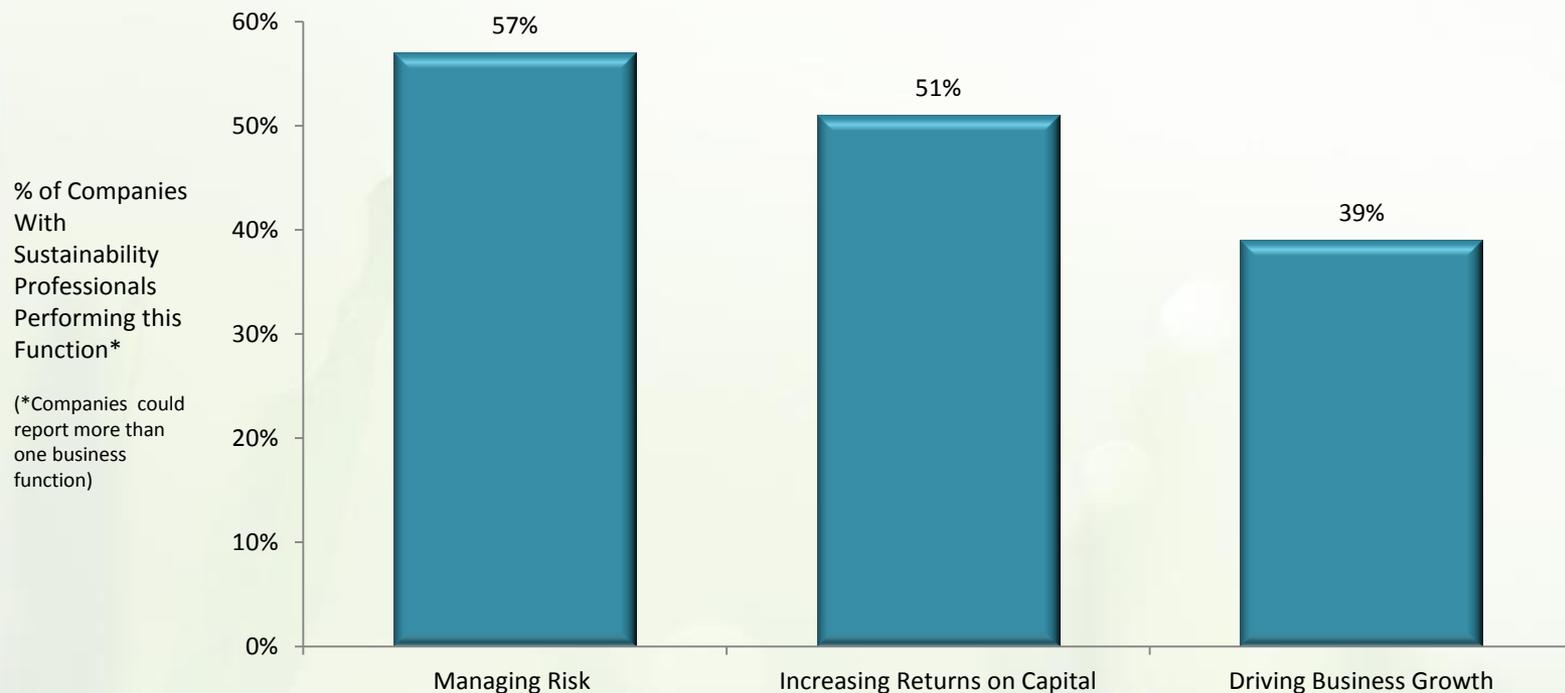
“Practitioners who spend **at least 50%** of their time performing activities related to **environmental, economic or social sustainability.**”

**50,659** Sustainability Professionals work in Canada

At least **18%** of Canadian organizations have at least one or more Sustainability Professionals on staff

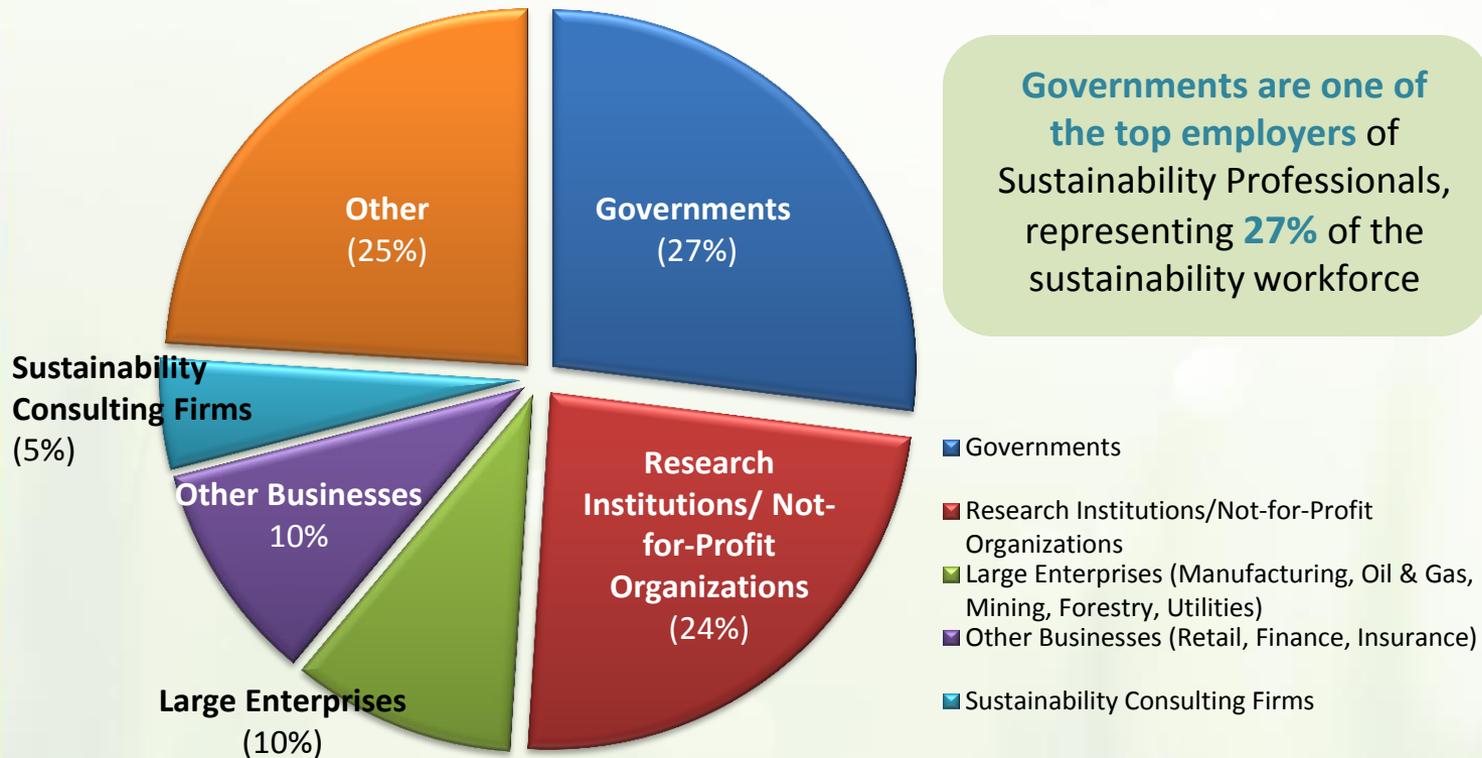
# Why Do Companies Need Sustainability Professionals?

Employers depend on their sustainability staff to support key business functions – especially **Managing Risk** and **Increasing Returns on Capital**

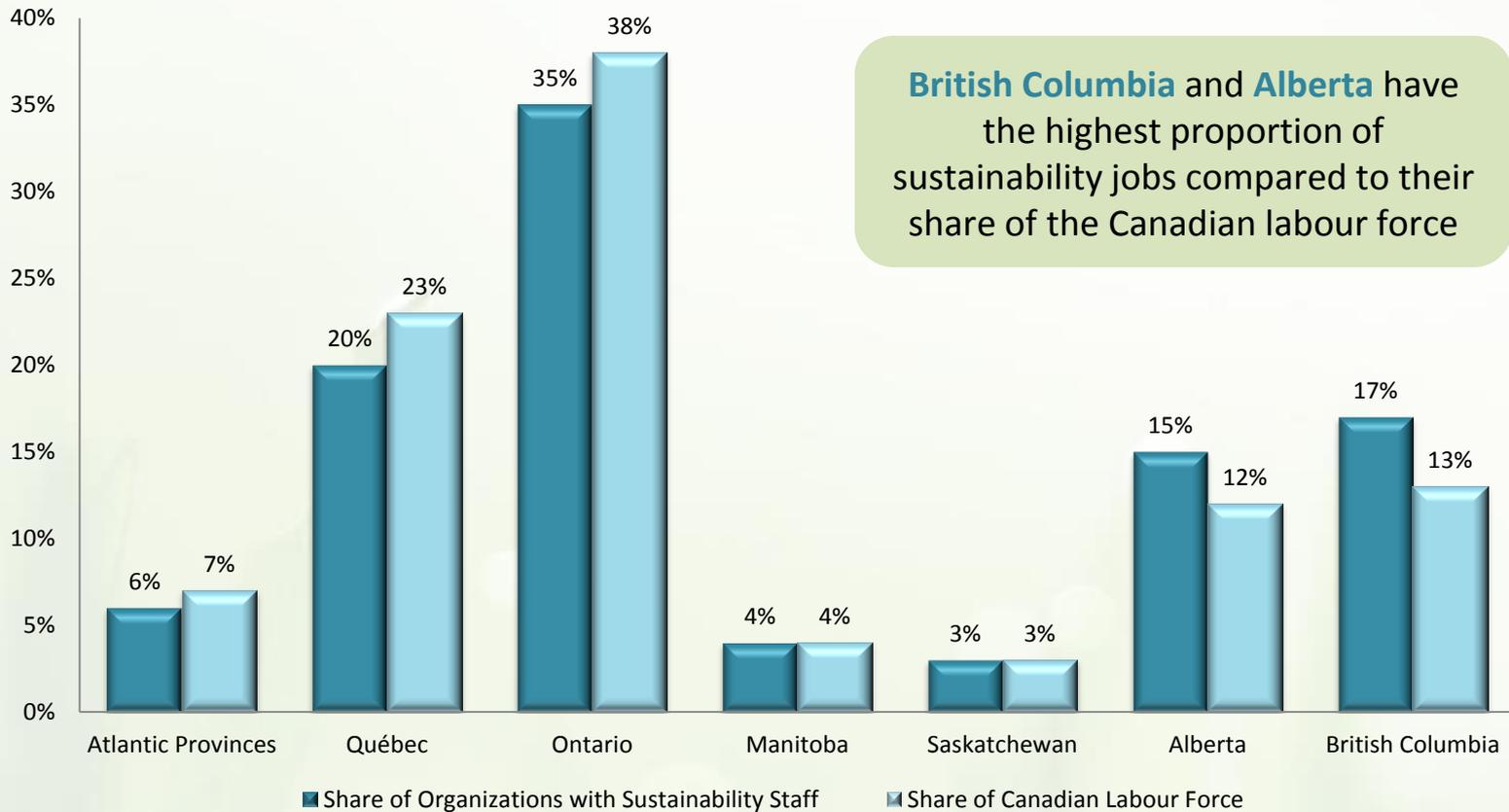


# Top Sustainability Employers

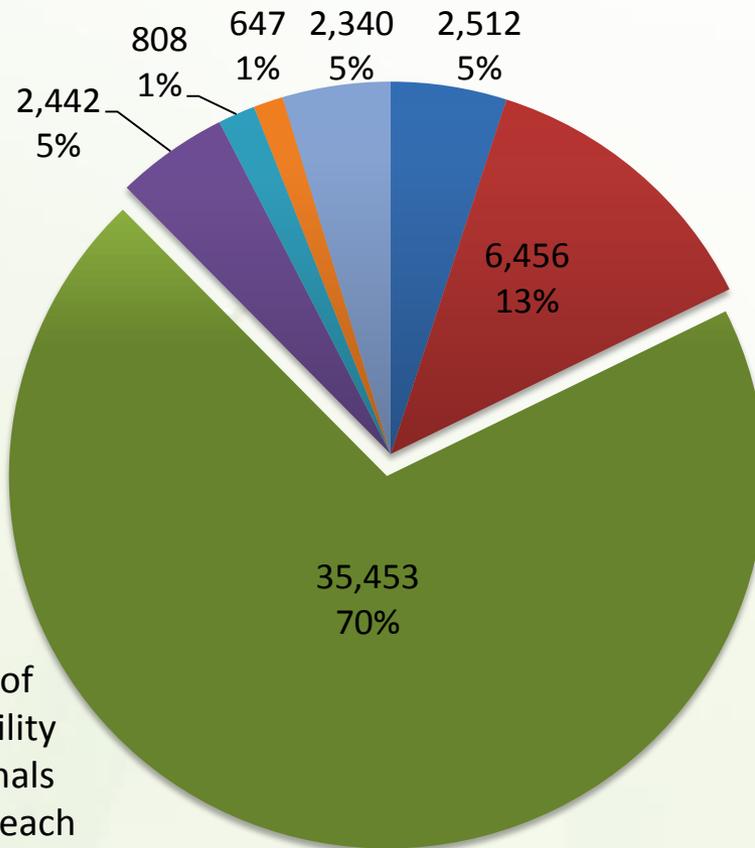
Distribution of Sustainability Workforce by Employer Type



# Where are the Jobs?



# Profiling the Sustainability Workforce

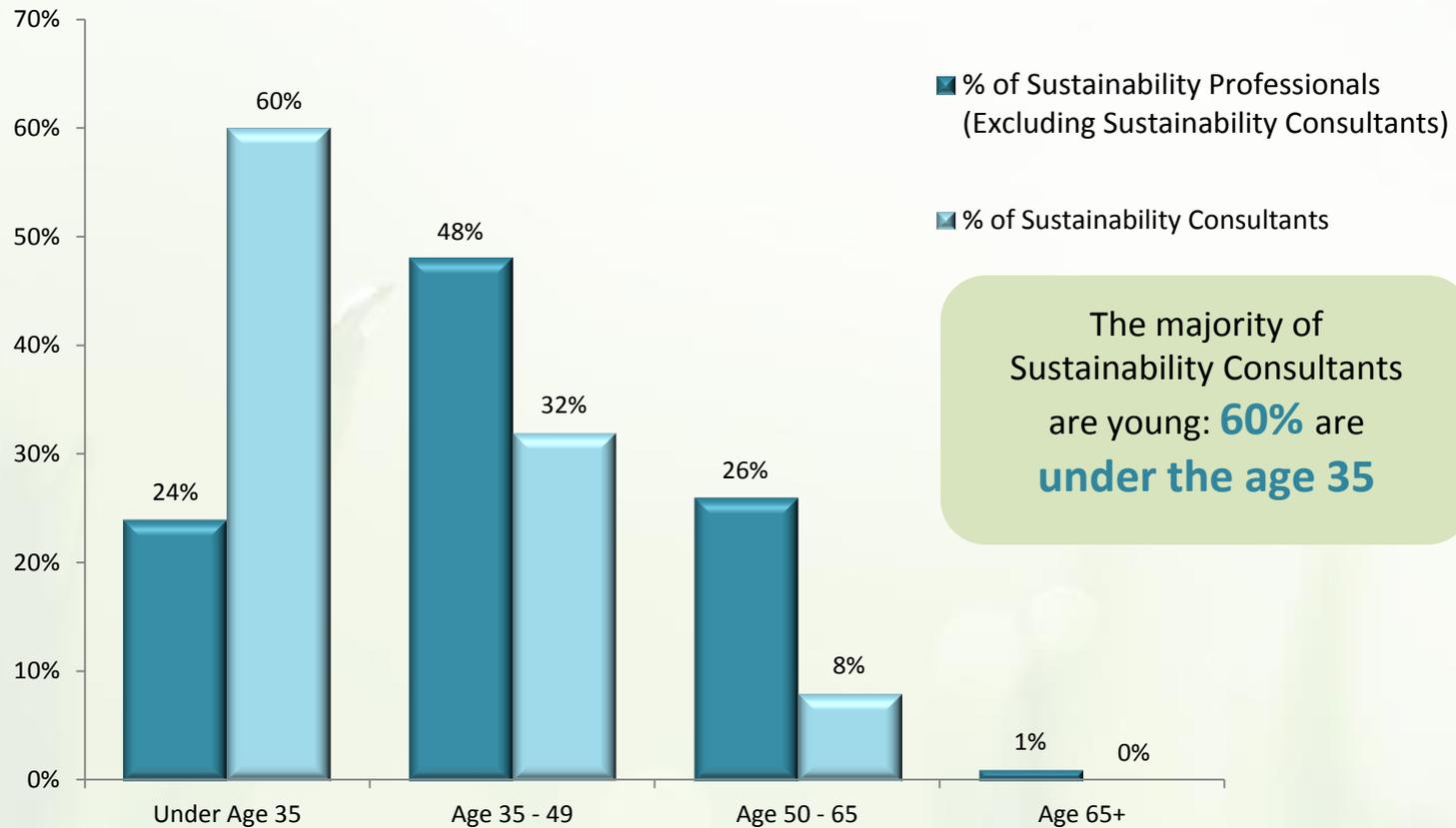


# and % of Sustainability Professionals working in each occupation

**70%** of Sustainability Professionals work as **Sustainability Specialists**

- Chief Sustainability Officer
- Sustainability Officer
- Sustainability Specialist
- Sustainability Researcher
- Sustainability Trainer
- Sustainability Educator
- Sustainability Consultant

# Age Distribution



# Level of Experience

Most Sustainability Professionals are at the **Mid to Senior point of their careers**, with 8+ years of professional experience

	Entry-Level ( < 1 year of experience)	Early Career ( 1 – 4 years of experience )	Mid-Career (5-7 years of experience)	Senior-Level (8+ years of experience)
Total # of Sustainability Professionals	789	9,319	12,388	28,163
Total % of Sustainability Workforce	1.6%	18.4%	24.5%	55.6%

# Education

**68%** of all Sustainability Professionals hold a Bachelor's degree or higher

Top Fields of Study for Sustainability Careers:

- **Business or Public Administration**
- **Physical or Life Sciences**
- **Engineering**
- **Social Sciences**
- **Natural Resources/Conservation**

**32%** of senior Sustainability Professionals have a degree in **Business or Public Administration**

Sustainability Consultants are more likely to hold degrees in **Physical/Life Sciences, Engineering or Natural Resources/Conservation**

# Key Skills in Sustainability

In their work, Sustainability Professionals rely on these top competencies:

Interpreting, enforcing and complying with environmental regulations and standards

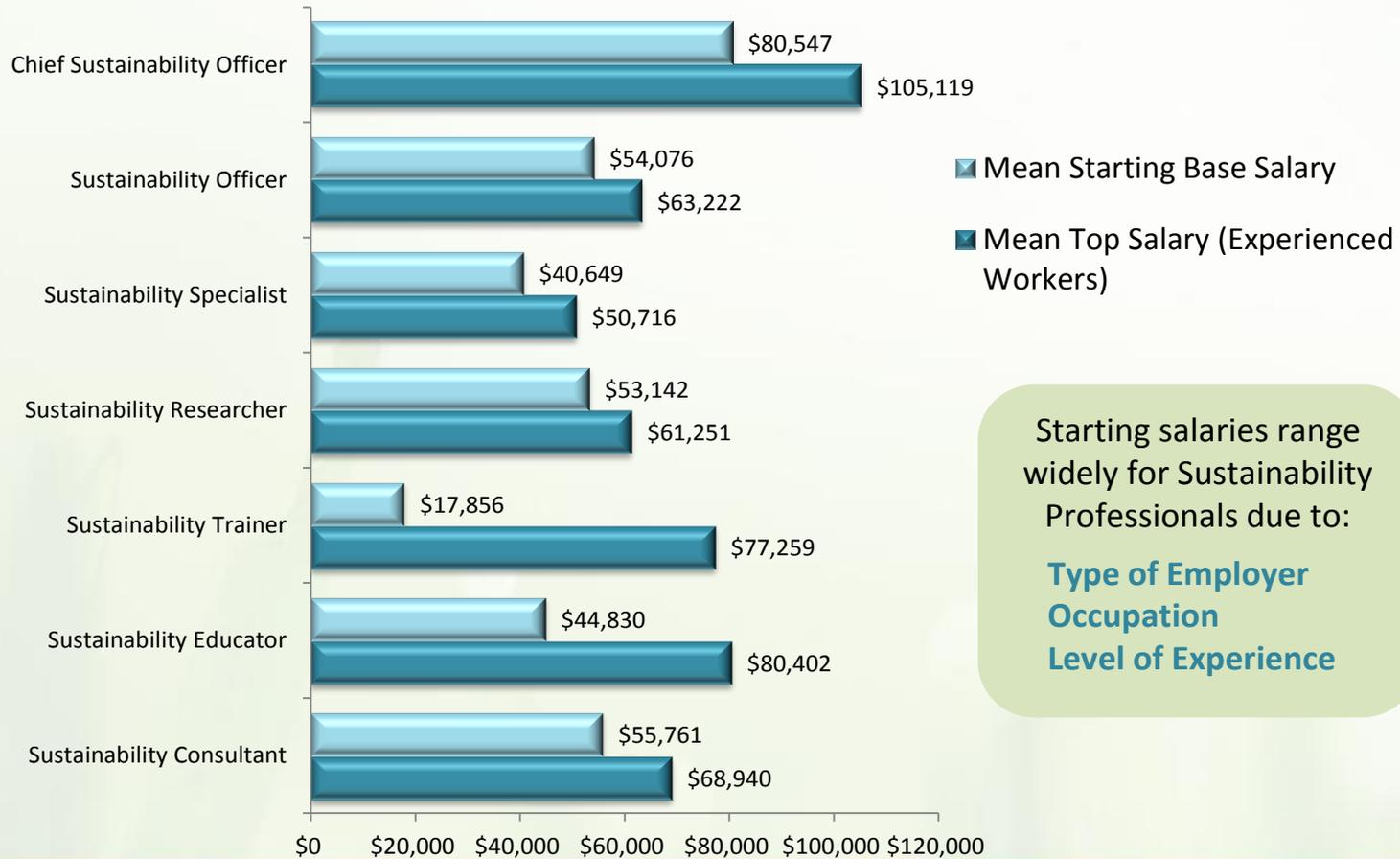
Implementing and monitoring sustainable development strategies and programs

Partnering with stakeholders

Developing corporate environmental sustainability policies and procedures

Building sustainable development indicators, plans and strategies

# How Much Do Sustainability Professionals Make in Canada?



Starting salaries range widely for Sustainability Professionals due to:

- Type of Employer
- Occupation
- Level of Experience

# The Forecast for Job Growth

Canadian jobs in sustainability will grow significantly in the next  
**3 to 5 years**

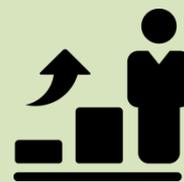
**84%** of sustainability consulting firms expect to hire



=

**400 new jobs**

**46%** of other sustainability employers will also increase their staff



=

**3,800 additional jobs**

# Key Take-Away Points

- 1.) **Sustainability jobs are in high demand**, with over 50,000 Canadian professionals performing work in this area.
- 2.) There are **viable and diverse career paths in sustainability**.
- 3.) Companies count on Sustainability Professionals to support core business functions, especially to **reduce risk and increase capital**
- 4.) **High levels of experience and education** are necessary for most careers in sustainability
- 5.) Sustainability Professionals draw upon **key skills related to environmental, economic and social sustainability** to support change management, strategic development and corporate social responsibility

# Thinking About a Career in Sustainability?

Here's how to:

## Get started

- Find out which careers are in top demand (and how to get them) in 7 New Sustainability Career Profiles.
- Learn more at: [www.eco.ca/training/career-profiles](http://www.eco.ca/training/career-profiles)

## Get recognized

- EP Sustainability is a new certification specialization to help you market your skills to sustainability employers and clients.
- Learn more about a specialization in sustainability at:  
<http://www.eco.ca/wp-content/uploads/Sustainability-Profile.pdf>

A special thanks to RDA Global Inc. for conducting this study. We also thank the numerous interviewees who graciously provided their time and insights.

Learn more about ECO Canada's ongoing labour market research at:

[www.eco.ca/research](http://www.eco.ca/research)



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