

## Summary of Learnings

# Roundtable on Inclusive Green Economy Training

## Summary

- As part of the implementation of its [Zero Emissions Economic Transition Action Plan](#), the Vancouver Economic Commission (VEC) is working with partners across Metro Vancouver to better prepare Vancouver's youth of today and workforce of tomorrow for jobs in the green economy.
- VEC hosted a **Roundtable on Inclusive Green Economy Training** in November 2022 to identify guiding principles for programs and projects to assist in the transition to an economy that is not only green, but also inclusive. Attendees of the roundtable included educators, youth, and industry.
- This memo details a brief analysis of current and future green economy training in Vancouver; new actions and activities to support green economy training; identified skills and competencies for the future green economy training; and next steps for the VEC and partners.

## Introduction

The Vancouver Economic Commission (VEC)'s Zero Emissions Economic Transition Action Plan (ZEETAP) identifies the need for work with educators, students, and industry to strengthen workforce readiness, and inclusivity, for the green economy. To initiate this work, VEC hosted a roundtable in November 2022 to better understand:

1. The current and future state of green jobs in Vancouver and British Columbia.
2. How VEC and industry can better support educators in providing inclusive green economy training for youth.
3. The skills and competencies needed for a future inclusive green economy in Vancouver.
4. The roles that potential actors need to uphold to provide inclusive green economy training.

Learnings from the roundtable will be used to guide VEC and partners as we create professional development materials for green economy training and advocate for stronger coordination amongst the green economy training ecosystem in Vancouver. What follows is an overview of the discussion from the roundtable, divided into relevant thematic groupings.

# Analysis of Current and Future Green Economy Training in Vancouver

## 1. Growth and Transitions in Existing Industries

The transition to a decarbonized economy in Vancouver signals that jobs will also be greener. Vancouver's workforce has already seen a drastic increase for the need for **green talent with an 87% growth from 2010 – 2021**. Many existing industries in Vancouver have experienced exponential growth in the greening of existing jobs. Existing industries identified at the roundtable include the financial sector, engineering, geoscience, materials management, trades (specifically buildings), marketing and sales, and others.

Examples of greening jobs:

- **CPA Canada** has seen an increased need for proficiency in climate-related topics as it is a fast-growing area of interest for Canadian and global enterprises.
- . Specific examples include the greening of roles such as building managers, building operations and building scientists.
- **Sales and marketing** has experienced a growing demand for salespeople who are technically versed in climate-related topics.

## 2. New Role-Types in Existing Industries

The growing demand for greener and more inclusive operations in businesses has resulted in new role-types created in existing industries. LinkedIn's Global Green Skills Report (2022), for example, found that Sustainability Manager was the top growing green job in terms of annual growth.

Specific roles identified at the roundtable include:

- Chief Value Officers, who evaluate the impact and dependencies within and without an organization shifting from performance to value creation (e.g. ESG).
- Chief Wellbeing Officers, who focus on supporting the mental, physical, and spiritual wellness of employees and help shift the mindset of employees to support a regenerative economy.
- Energy advisors, heat pump installers and other green building jobs, which have seen increased demand.

## 3. Labour Demands in Expanding Sectors

Expanding sectors in Vancouver will continue to further the demand for green talent. Although expanding sectors may not create many net-new green jobs, there will be an increase in demand for integration of climate knowledge with traditional roles.

Current expanding sectors include:

- Cleantech, which will create further demand for workers, primarily in data collection, analysis, and tactical/strategic implementation. The roundtable identified that

integrating climate knowledge with data and digitally driven skills/competencies will be crucial.

- The circular economy, which is creating jobs in materials and logistical management (moving existing goods from A-to-B with a high level of technological familiarity) and recreating the demand for artisan jobs (e.g. cobblers, furniture restoration, etc.).

## **New Actions and Activities to Support Green Economy Training**

### **1. Current Education Landscape for Green Economy Training in Vancouver and BC**

To better understand the supports needed for educators, the roundtable discussed the current education landscape in Vancouver. Findings include:

- Educators have autonomy to include green economy and climate change lessons in their classrooms.
- Currently, there is a knowledge gap amongst educators on climate change and the green economy. Only the most motivated and knowledgeable educators will access third-party materials that may not be applicable to BC and/or Vancouver's job market context.
- The current workload of educators is a barrier to incorporating green economy training due to burnout and pay compensation.
- The breadth of possible jobs in the green economy makes it difficult for educators to share accurate and meaningful information with students.

### **2. Identified Supports for Educators**

The roundtable identified the following needs and opportunities for greater support for educators on the green economy:

- Educators need high-quality, simple, and readily accessible professional development materials that assist with understanding of the broad economic and social elements of climate change.
- Educators need specific professional development materials, example lesson plans, activity suggestions, and other high-quality, easily accessible assets related to the green economy.
- Any materials must strongly integrate Indigenous perspectives on reconciliation (both in general terms and with reference to BC's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) and broader questions of equity and justice.
- Educators need clarification of, and resources for, the diversity of green careers available, and additional support to link the competencies and skills of those careers to existing (and needed) curriculum. For example, a green profession in accounting can include introductions to carbon accounting in accounting or math classes.

- Educators, and particularly guidance counsellors, need guidance and training to assist students in understanding the wide application of their skills into different green economy professions.

### 3. Potential Roles and Responsibilities for Different Actors

Preparing the future workforce of Vancouver’s green economy requires actions from multiple actors.

Identified roles and responsibilities include:

- **Provincial Government**
  - Shift educator qualifications to ensure effective understanding of sustainability and climate action.
  - Create more opportunities to expand or compliment the curriculum to include education on the green economy, energy systems, and climate change.
- **Industry Organizations and Businesses**
  - Work with schools’ career offices and others to develop more internship opportunities .
  - Work with economic developers and government to identify and communicate to educators the future needs of their industry.
  - Build internal understanding of climate-related priorities, opportunities and challenges, and develop ways of communicating these – particularly their own sustainability story and priorities to potential employees.
  - Build understanding of, and connectivity to, educators to share their interests, needs and opportunities for young workers.
- **Non-profits**
  - Develop forecasts, heat maps and other explanatory resources to help educators understand where current and future job opportunities lie.
  - Collaborate with educators to develop and share learning resources on the green economy, such as the Academy for Sustainable Innovation (ASI)’s efforts to develop a national micro-credentialing framework .
- **Unions**
  - Continue work to destigmatize and raise the profile of less desirable green jobs, particularly those in the trades.
- **School Boards**
  - Support the creation of specific Sustainability Departments within schools to direct programming, courses, and educator training.
  - Work to provide greater linkages to mentors and experts knowledgeable in climate action and the green economy.

## Identified Skills & Competencies for Inclusive Green Economy Training

The roundtable conclusively agreed that skills will be constantly changing to match the needs of a shifting economy. Therefore, young people need to have well-rounded competencies and a clear understanding of the current and future applicability of their skills amidst the ever-shifting market.

### Identified Competencies for an Inclusive Green Economy:

- Self-awareness and awareness of others
- Compassion
- Shift from competitive to collaborative mindset
- Resilience and adaptability
- Connectivity
- Conflict management
- Design thinking

### Identified Skills for an Inclusive Green Economy:

*\*some skills listed below can also become competencies overtime through increased knowledge and ability\**

- All technical skills, regardless of industry or occupation, need to be agile and updated consistently.
- Project management is a cross-cutting skill that will be critical in all sectors and occupations.
- Data management is a cross-cutting skill that will be critical in all sectors and occupations.
- Robust climate and sustainability knowledge is an asset (e.g. what is carbon, how is it measured, etc.).
- To advance the circular economy specifically, people will need a basic understanding of materials science to compare the values and trade-offs of different materials.
- Strong communication skills – written, spoken, visual – should emphasize storytelling and empathy.
- Eco-literacy related to landscapes, materials, and biological systems is necessary to raise overall workforce comprehension on topics related to the green economy.
- Change management skills related to transitioning organizations through shifts in their organization’s outlook, objectives, tactics, and basic functions in ways that support climate- (and other issue) positive outcomes.

## Next Steps

During the roundtable, we heard numerous ideas that VEC and partners around the table can action in the short and long term.

### Immediate next steps are to:

1. Support follow-up discussions with industry representatives, employers, think tanks and green jobs organizations to further identify skills and competencies for current and future green jobs.
2. Further engage educators and industry partners to co-develop professional development materials (e.g. reports, lesson plans, activities, "human libraries" and other resources) for educators to better prepare young people for the green economy.
3. Share outputs of this conversation, as well as future conversations, with the PICS Climate and Education Working Group, the BC Climate Action Secretariat, and other relevant actors.

**Longer-term needs and opportunities include:**

1. Developing programs and materials aimed at destigmatizing trades from “professions of last resort” and elevating their status as decent, inclusive and respectable green jobs.
2. Exploring how to use school facilities as “living laboratories” so educators, students, industry and community members can learn and decarbonize simultaneously.
3. Assessing how green economy skills and competencies can be integrated into BC Core Competencies.

**Attendees**

The roundtable hosted a wide range of stakeholders from education, youth, think tanks, government, and industry.

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