

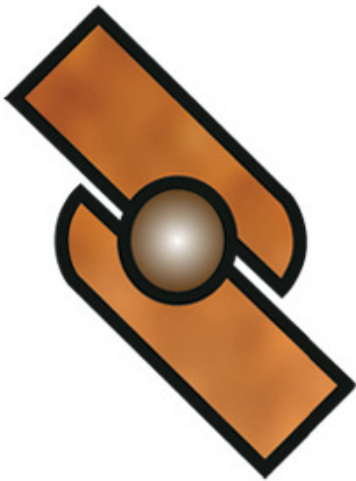


Workplace Partners Panel Atlantic Provinces Task Force

“What We Heard” *Summary of Key Findings for the province of New Brunswick*

April 25, 2006
Delta Beauséjour
Moncton, New Brunswick

*** DRAFT ***



*This report was prepared by Ascentum
for the Workplace Partners Panel, an initiative of the Canadian Labour
and Business Centre funded by Human Resources and Skills
Development Canada.*





Table of Contents



	Page(s)
Executive Summary	iii
Background	1
Methodology	3
Making Choices	4
Workforce	9
Economic Development	14
Education and Training	19
Strategic Considerations	24
Pre- /Post-dialogue Surveys	27
Final Comments	33
Appendix 1: APTF Inputs	34
Appendix 2: Participants' Priorities	37
Appendix 3: Pre-/Post-dialogue Surveys	38
Appendix 4: Participants List	39
Appendix 5: WPP Atlantic Task Force	41





Executive Summary

The **Workplace Partners Panel (WPP)** is a national initiative created by the Canadian Labour and Business Centre, with support from the federal government, specifically to bring business and labour leaders together to examine different labour market challenges facing Canada. While these are pan-Canadian challenges, the WPP recognizes that long-term solutions must reflect local and regional realities. This is why the WPP's first major initiative was designed to draw out provincial/regional "Best Thinking" on the critical issue of ***skills needs in the context of an aging workforce***, and involved the creation of regional task forces.

The **WPP Atlantic Provinces Task Force (APTF)** is comprised of senior labour and business leaders from each province in the region. Given that the issue of ***skills needs in the context of an aging workforce*** is so broad and complex, the APTF's exploration involved a review of multiple inputs (provincial deliberative dialogues, online consultation, research report, surveys) and focused on three priority topics:

1. *Workforce*: challenges relating to youth, immigrants, the unemployed, and underemployed, older workers.
2. *Economic development*: challenges relating to job creation, productivity and innovation.
3. *Education and training*: challenges relating to stakeholder coordination, workplace training and lifelong learning, and trades and technologies.

This report synthesizes the key findings from the **New Brunswick deliberative dialogue**, which was held in Moncton, on April 25, 2006. This report is one of the inputs that the APTF New Brunswick Task Force members are using to develop their thinking on approaches to address the over-arching challenge of skills needs in the context of an aging workforce.

Please note that all content provided in this report reflects what participants said during the dialogue. As such, the report does not represent the views of the Canadian Labour and Business Centre, the Atlantic Provinces Task Force or the Workplace Partners Panel and its staff. In addition, facts and figures presented by participants and included in the report have not been verified for accuracy.

1. Workforce

Youth: With regards to the workforce, dialogue participants placed much emphasis on the potential of youth. They felt that New Brunswick needs to better understand what motivates young people to leave (or return) so that the right actions can be taken to encourage more of them to stay and work in the province (especially in the case of highly-skilled youth). Several participants also commented that it is essential to engage youth in dialogue and decision-making on labour and skills issues. Participants emphasized the need to educate youth on the possibilities and opportunities available to them and that this process should begin as early as



DRAFT

possible. They stressed that the province's schools should play a key role here (e.g., more guidance counsellors in schools), working in partnership with business and labour (e.g., more school-to-work initiatives such as co-ops and internships programs).

Trades: Participants noted that trades are not perceived to be or recognized as a valuable career path for youth, and so fewer and fewer are choosing careers in these industries. They also felt that removal of trade-oriented courses from school and college curricula has made skills shortages worse. Participants called for a renewed focus on trades and vocational training in the education system. Some suggested using supports and incentives, like scholarships, to encourage students to pursue training in high demand trades.

Role of the employer: Participants discussed at some length the role of employers (and of labour organizations) in developing a skilled workforce. Participants believed that employers should "take ownership of and show leadership on" labour market issues by investing in their employees and providing competitive working conditions and benefits. However, they also acknowledged that this is sometimes more difficult for small and medium-sized businesses with less resources for staff development. They also noted that it is these smaller companies that will be hit first by shortages in skilled workers.

Women: Participants pointed out that the needs, role and place of women in the workforce is different from that of men, and that labour market strategies should consider this.

Immigration: Although participants saw immigration as an important long-term strategy, it was deemed a lower priority issue compared to the need to retain/repatriate the province's youth.

2. Economic Development

Economic development strategy: Participants saw economic development as the foundation on which solutions to the province's skills challenges can be built, but stated that there is a need for a concerted, collaborative approach to economic development that would be guided by a clearly articulated long-term vision and strategy. This strategy, they added, should be based around critical challenges that New Brunswick is facing, including the *regional disparity* between the province's North and South regions. It should also have as an objective the diversification of the province's economy and take into account the fact that a large portion of the province's business sector is comprised of *small to mid-sized businesses*. Dialogue members suggested that the first task was to *raise awareness* about the pending workforce challenges in order to *mobilize* all stakeholders towards change. This could consist of "buy local" campaigns to build solidarity amongst New Brunswickers and initiatives, similar to the Public Forum held in May 2006 in Bathurst, which mobilized stakeholders across the public and private sectors.

Quality of employment: Participants commented that if the economy is to develop in a healthy way, the structural challenges of precarious and under-employment would have to be addressed. For example, some felt that the public sector's casual worker policy has led to an increase in precarious employment. Others felt that employers must strive to improve the quality of employment through better job conditions, but also by lobbying government to support programs that help workers, such as childcare.



3. Education and Training

Dialogue participants saw education and training as a pivotal topic and a major driver for economic and workforce development, but believed that to be effective it needs to be seen as an investment, not a cost or an expense.

Capacity/accessibility of the education system: Participants felt that the education system is not equipped to handle the current demand for *skilled trades* training and that there is a general lack of funding for and commitment to training and skills development. They also highlighted geographic, linguistic, and financial barriers that make it difficult for students to access the education they are looking for. Finally, participants indicated that *literacy* is a problem that must be addressed in the province's schools.

Workplace training: Participants felt that business and labour had an important role to play in the training field and cited the need to explore alternative delivery models, such as making more use of on-site/on-the-job training or online training.

Stakeholder coordination: Participants stressed the importance of better coordination across stakeholders to ensure the education system fulfills its role of preparing students/workers for the labour market. As stakeholders, they included government (both elected officials and bureaucrats), business, labour, educational institutions (both private and public), communities, and parents. Participants also suggested that coordination implies good communication with respect to the roles, responsibilities and expectations of all parties (e.g., clarifying expectations of parents or of labour; helping people understand the challenges faced by business and the precariousness of the environment in which it must operate; creating more links between school and industry).

4. Strategic Considerations

Role of government: Participants stressed that New Brunswick's ability to deal with the issue of skills needs in the context of an aging workforce will require stronger commitment and leadership on the part of the provincial government. For example, some participants suggested the need for a provincial labour minister or for a provincial structure that could help coordinate efforts to address labour market issues. Others noted a lack of coordination within and across governments, stating that it is often very difficult to obtain information and support for existing programs.

Labour market vision/labour market information: Dialogue participants stated that there needs to be a clear provincial vision for the labour market that is understood and supported by all stakeholders – a strategic plan. They added that action to meet this vision should be collaborative but with key stakeholders, including the provincial government, taking a leadership role. Such a plan, they added, must be built upon a foundation of accurate labour market information: participants spoke of the importance of collecting and disseminating timely, accurate labour market information to help all stakeholders in their planning and decision-making. They also stressed that the onus was on business to clearly articulate its labour needs, and that once the province knows the future areas of job growth, it can then develop a strategy to train workers to fill these jobs.



Final Comments

Participants in the New Brunswick dialogue emphasized that the issue of skills needs in the context of an aging workforce is a broad and complex one. As a result, they put great emphasis on the need for collaborative action. This, they felt, required three conditions:

- Planning and decision-making that are based on a shared understanding of the issues (hence the call for good, timely and accurate labour market information);
- Mechanisms to open more channels of communications and build new levels of trust amongst stakeholders;
- A focus on concrete solutions that take into account regional disparities within the province.

Participants pointed to the willingness of those in the room – and those who weren't there – to collaborate on these labour market issues and expressed an interest in seeing continued communication and collaboration between business and labour and other stakeholders. Michel Boudreau, New Brunswick Labour representative on the WPP Atlantic Task Force, suggested that a follow-up meeting be held in the fall, to discuss the findings of this dialogue and to explore possible next steps.





1. Background

The Workplace Partners Panel (WPP) is a national initiative created specifically to bring business and labour leaders together, to examine different labour market challenges facing Canada.

The WPP Atlantic Provinces Task Force (APTF) is comprised of a senior labour leader and a senior business leader from each of the Atlantic provinces.

The **Workplace Partners Panel (WPP)** is a national initiative created by the Canadian Labour and Business Centre (CLBC) with support from the federal government specifically to bring business and labour leaders together, to examine different labour market challenges facing Canada. While these are pan-Canadian challenges, the WPP recognizes that long-term solutions must reflect local and regional realities. This is why the WPP's first major initiative was designed to draw out provincial/regional "Best Thinking" on the critical issue of ***skills needs in the context of an aging workforce***, and involved the creation of regional task forces.

The **WPP Atlantic Provinces Task Force (APTF)** is comprised of senior labour and business leaders from each of the Atlantic provinces. The mandate of the APTF is to:

- Demonstrate, through its leadership, the power of dialogue and collaboration between business and labour;
- Help identify and articulate provincial and regional "Best Thinking" on the issue of skills needs in the context of an aging workforce;
- Ensure that the topics explored during the provincial dialogues and online consultation reflect provincial/regional realities;
- Be the "face of the WPP" in their province and in the region (e.g., by hosting their provincial dialogue and presenting a report of their findings to the national WPP board).

To this end, the APTF was provided with a number of different data sources or inputs, to help inform its deliberations. These included:

1. The WPP Atlantic Handbook
2. The WPP Viewpoints Survey
3. The WPP General Population Survey
4. The WPP Online Dialogue
5. The WPP Provincial Dialogues

Note: The contents and purpose of each of these inputs are described in further detail in Appendix 1.

Given that the issue of skills needs in the context of an aging workforce is a



DRAFT

broad and complex one, the APTF's exploration of the issues focused on three priority topics¹ – and some of their related challenges – that are inherent to the issue:

1. **Workforce:** challenges relating to youth, immigrants, the unemployed and underemployed, older workers.
2. **Economic development:** challenges relating to job creation, productivity, and innovation.
3. **Education and training:** challenges relating to stakeholder coordination, workplace training and lifelong learning, and trades and technologies.

The APTF's exploration of the issue focused on three topics (and their related challenges): the workforce, economic development, and education and training.

This report synthesizes the key findings from the New Brunswick provincial dialogue, which was held in Moncton, on April 25, 2006.

Please note that all content provided in this report reflects what participants said during the dialogue. As such, the report does not represent the views of the Canadian Labour and Business Centre, the Atlantic Task Force or the Workplace Partners Panel and its staff. In addition, facts and figures presented by participants and included in the report have not been verified for accuracy.

As outlined above, this report is one of the inputs that the APTF New Brunswick representatives are using to develop their thinking on approaches to address the over-arching challenge of skills needs in the context of an aging workforce. Elements of this report will also be included in the New Brunswick chapter of the APTF's final report.

How Is This Initiative Different?

Leadership

- Places business and labour in the driver's seat together.

Ownership

- Offers a unique opportunity to influence all stakeholders to take ownership of this critical issue.

Relationship

- Aims to identify common values, i.e. what matters most
- Recognizes and respects differences, i.e. "where we agree to disagree"
- Focuses on opportunities for collaborative action

¹ These topics and challenges were identified by APTF members based on background research conducted by the WPP team, individual interviews with each of the APTF members and a prioritization of potential topics and challenges by the APTF as a whole.





2. Methodology

An important dimension of dialogue is choice work, whereby participants are called upon to make difficult choices, based on what they value or believe to be important. During the deliberative dialogue, participants were invited to share their views and identify their priorities throughout the day.

Expectations and concerns

Participants opened the day by introducing themselves to the plenary and identifying their key concerns or expectations.

Priority challenges

The morning conversation was then dedicated to understanding the issue and identifying priorities. The question used to focus the morning conversation was: *What key topics and specific challenges are important to you and why?* This part of the conversation was concluded by a prioritization exercise.

Opportunities for action

The afternoon conversation then focused on opportunities for action. In particular, participants explored what needs to be done, by whom and under what conditions. The question used to focus this part of the conversation was: *What actions must be undertaken? By whom? Under what conditions?*

Pre- and post-dialogue questionnaires

As a supplement to their detailed conversations and dialogue, participants were asked to fill out two questionnaires, which would provide additional and more quantifiable assessments of their perspectives. A pre-dialogue questionnaire was administered on the morning of the deliberative dialogue, prior to the start of the dialogue proceedings. A post-dialogue questionnaire, containing the same set of questions as the first, was administered at the end of the deliberative dialogue. The pre- and post-dialogue questionnaires allow for an analysis of participants' perspectives on issues pertaining to skills needs in the context of an aging workforce, and for an examination of how the deliberative dialogue experience itself may have influenced or changed those perspectives.

The following pages provide a summary of the concerns and priorities identified by participants during the first half of the day. They then summarize key findings from the dialogue as they relate to the three topics proposed by the APTF, including a number of additional strategic considerations that have emerged from participants' discussions. It concludes by providing a summary of the input collected through the pre- and post-dialogue questionnaire.





3. Making Choices

As outlined in Section 2, participants were invited to identify their priorities and concerns at various points of the dialogue. Following is a summary of the concerns expressed by participants in their introductory comments, as well as the priorities they identified during the morning prioritization exercise. As mentioned in the previous section, a key component of dialogue is choice work that asks participants to make choices based on what they value most highly.

3.1 Morning Introductions: Concerns and Expectations

Participants expressed appreciation for the fact that a national initiative like the WPP had committed itself to paying attention to regional challenges.

During the opening session, participants were invited to introduce themselves, and to briefly address their hopes for the session and some of their key concerns. Many acknowledged the importance of the skills shortage issue, highlighting that not only the province, but also the country as a whole was in “pre-crisis” stage. Some stakeholders focused on shortages in particular sectors (e.g., trucking, energy, rail transport, health care, and mega-projects in different sectors). Others highlighted the fact that the situation in Northern New Brunswick was particularly challenging, and emphasized the importance of recognizing and addressing the distinct nature of rural and urban challenges. Many participants expressed the hope that the dialogue session was the beginning of a process of further collaboration, cooperation, and dialogue that could lead to better local or regional initiatives or solutions. They stressed the importance of partnerships, of coordinating efforts and of raising awareness of this issue. There was also some appreciation for the fact that a national initiative like the WPP had committed itself to paying attention to regional challenges.



New Brunswick Provincial Dialogue: Participants' Expectations and Concerns²

Labour market challenges

- Geographical challenges for human resources planning in large companies
- The future for workers (e.g., influx of what seems to be cheap labour, making people work until they're 80)
- Agricultural community; seasonal workforce requirements
- International workers
- Women's labour market participation
- Integration of youth – particularly Aboriginal youth – into the labour market

Strategy / Concerted action

- Role and place of educational institutions in the discussion on these questions
- Need for a local and regional human resource initiative
- Challenges for small businesses to connect with such collaborative efforts
- In 1996, one of the New Brunswick Labour Force Development Board's (now dismantled) big issues was skills shortages – still discussing these issues. There is a need for action
- Globalization issue
- Alberta's skills shortages could soon be coming to N.B., with the prospect of mega-projects coming to the province

Demographic

- Distinction between the challenges of aging workforce and low birth rates – two separate issues, requiring two sets of solutions

Immigration

- New-Brunswick immigration strategy for attracting and retaining newcomers
- Integration of immigrants, international students into labour market
- Concern that immigrants are seen as pool of "cheap labour"

Youth

- Don't marginalize a whole generation into low-paid work
- Out-migration / retention / repatriation

Education and training

- Lowest level of language instruction for young Canadians in Atlantic Canada
- Literacy, numeracy promotion; laddering opportunities for learners
- Workplace training in small businesses
- Lack of capacity in colleges to accommodate needs

Trades

- Very worried about how to attract trades people to our province
- We all told our kids to go to university, but we need to talk about good jobs in the trades
- Lack of engineering technologists coming out of community colleges

Northern N.B. / Rural vs. Urban

- Crises in fisheries, paper, and eventually mining
- Large out-migration
- Literacy problems
- Aging population (very little of the regional population is aged 25-45)
- Need to create employment
- Retirement is not the problem as much as creating opportunities that will allow us to retain our youth
- Need to take a collective message to the federal government that it's no longer about East-West or North-South issues, but rather rural-urban – and most of the solutions being talked about are focused on urban

² As expressed by participants when they introduced themselves during the opening session of the New Brunswick provincial dialogue.



3.2 Priorities of Provincial Dialogue Participants

The first part of the dialogue was dedicated to exploring the challenges faced by New Brunswick with respect to the issues of skills needs in the context of its aging workforce, in small group discussions. At the end of this conversation, participants within each group were asked to identify which topics or challenges were most important to them. In order to get a sense of individual priorities, each participant was given a budget of \$5. They were then asked to indicate which of the challenges (including any their group might have added to the list) they would choose to allocate their limited resources to, and why they made these choices. Participants could put all of their money on a single challenge or could split their \$5 as they saw fit amongst several challenges. Each group then summed up individual allocations and reported back to the plenary how its members had allocated their \$5.

The following table summarizes how funds were allocated across all groups:

Please see Appendix 2 for a detailed breakdown of how each group allocated its limited resources.

Participant Priorities: \$5 Allocation Exercise

Topic	Challenge	Total (by challenge)		Total (by topic)
		\$	Voices	\$
Workforce	Youth	\$22.75	19	\$48.75
	Immigrants	\$10.50	8	
	Unemployed / underemployed	\$13.50	11	
	Older workers	\$2.00	3	
Economic Development	Job creation	\$26.50	14	\$40.50
	Productivity	\$4.50	4	
	Innovation	\$9.50	8	
Education and training	B/L/G/E coordination	\$38.25	27	\$96.25
	Workplace training and lifelong learning	\$33.00	22	
	Trades and technologies	\$25.00	16	
Other	NB Minister of Labour/Labour market vision and strategy*	\$4.50*	3	\$12.50
	Low birth rate/work and family policies	\$4.00	4	
	North/south – rural/urban	\$5.00	4	
	Language	\$3.50	2	
	Global context	\$0.00	0	

* Included in "B/L/G/E coordination" by Blue group

Note: the total dollar amount represents the total dollars allocated to the challenge or topic across all groups, while the "voices" refer to the number of participants who chose to allocate their funds to a particular challenge (e.g., 19 people allocated a total of \$22.75 to youth-related challenges).



DRAFT

As can be seen, the broad topic of “Education and Training” was made a clear priority by participants, who allocated their funds to this topic in a ratio of two to one, for a total of \$96.25. On this note, they also pointed out that education and training must be seen as an investment in the future, rather than as a short-term cost.

The broad topic of “Education and Training” was made a clear priority by participants, who allocated their funds to this topic in a ratio of two to one.

Within this topic, coordination across stakeholders (business, labour, government, and the education system) was deemed to be the most important challenge (\$38.25), with one group adding the need for a provincial minister of Labour and provincial labour market vision/strategy under this heading. Dialogue members also felt a thorough needs analysis of the situation was required, as was good labour market information. Workplace training and lifelong learning received almost as much support (\$33.00), with participants emphasizing that addressing this challenge actually underpins the solution to many of the workforce and economic development challenges. Finally, the need to direct more youth towards trades and technologies to address shortages in these areas was highlighted, as was the corresponding need to invest in training capacity and infrastructure. Attendees also pointed to the need to raise awareness of these being viable career paths (\$25.00).

With respect to the workforce, a strong emphasis was placed on youth and the need to ensure they are ready to take advantage of opportunities in the labour market.

“Workforce” and “Economic Development” received \$48.75 and \$40.50 respectively. With respect to the workforce, a strong emphasis was placed on youth (\$22.75) and the need to ensure they are ready to take advantage of opportunities in the labour market. The group also felt that efforts must be made to find solutions to help the province’s unemployed/underemployed (\$13.50). Immigration was perceived to be part of the solution to the skills challenge, but was a lesser priority (\$10.50) for group members who first wanted to address the issues faced by New Brunswickers.

With respect to economic development, job creation emerged as the key challenge.

With respect to economic development, job creation emerged as the key challenge (\$26.50), as participants saw access to quality and meaningful employment as an inherent part of the solution to issues such as the out-migration of youth, the attraction, and retention of immigrants, unemployment/underemployment and the ability to protect the overall quality of life of New Brunswickers. While productivity and innovation received less support (\$4.50 and \$9.50 respectively), group members were quick to point out that this continues to be important if businesses are to succeed and remain competitive moving forward. Participants also cited as important challenges the lack of a concerted and integrated approach (e.g., a vision, a strategy) and the lack of ownership and accountability for this issue.

Finally, they indicated that all three topics were intimately related, pointing out that, for example, education and training and workforce issues were connected and constituted the foundation of economic success.

They posed a number of fundamental questions: what does the economy need, what are the skills requirements of the future? How do we match those needs (opportunities) with workers (all workers, youth, etc.) and with the work being done in and by education institutions? How can we help



DRAFT

Participants indicated that all three topics were intimately related, pointing out that, for example, education and training and workforce issues were connected and constituted the foundation of economic success.

businesses understand what the needs and opportunities are? How can we ensure that all New Brunswickers acquire the general literacy and essential workplace skills required to function in a knowledge economy?

Participants also commented on the need to review the province's overall infrastructure, in terms of how government funds and supports workplace partners. They also stressed the importance of action at the community level, both in terms of the effectiveness of this approach and of its ability to influence government.





4. Workforce

Participants emphasized the need to educate youth on the possibilities and opportunities available to them.

Participants called for concrete mechanisms to give youth a voice so they could express their needs and expectations – which are different from what those of their parents might have been.

During the New Brunswick provincial dialogue, participants spent some time discussing workforce-related challenges and possible opportunities for action. These included challenges faced by specific (and sometimes more vulnerable) groups such as youth, immigrants, and women. They also discussed the lack of participation in trades and technologies, and explored the role of employers in workforce development. The following presents a summary of the key points raised by participants throughout the dialogue.

4.1 Youth

With respect to youth's participation in the workforce, participants emphasized the need to educate youth on the possibilities and opportunities available to them. They also highlighted the importance of giving youth the opportunity to have a say and communicate their needs and expectations to educators, employers, unions, and governments. Participants also discussed some of the challenges associated with the school to work transition, and with the out-migration of the province's youth. Their key concerns included:

- **Lack of guidance/career counsellor capacity in schools:** participants felt that too few counsellors were equipped with the information (e.g., local labour market conditions, careers in trades and technologies, etc.) and resources required to effectively guide youth in their career choices. Participants noted that when school did have such counsellors on staff, they were usually overwhelmed by the demands and had to be focused primarily on crisis intervention.
- **Giving youth a voice:** dialogue members commented that youth have different expectations of work and employers than their parents did. They felt it critical that efforts be made to understand what is important to youth and to adapt accordingly. In particular, they called for concrete mechanisms to give youth a voice in dialogues of these types of skills/workforce issues, as well as in key institutions that have a role to play in addressing these issues. Finally, a youth participating in the dialogue pointed out that decision-makers must stop thinking in terms of "la relève" as this implies that youth's turn will come later, that they will replace someone. Rather, the participant added, the contribution of youth must be recognized and leveraged today.



Participants felt that it was important to reduce the delays and barriers between school and work.

- **School to work transition:** participants felt that it was important to reduce the delays and barriers between school and work. In particular, they indicated that programs that encourage the early integration of youth in the workforce (e.g., coop, internships, etc.) are critical in making the school to work transition easier for both youth and employers. Attendees thought that this also played a key role in helping youth acquire essential workplace and/or soft skills they might not necessarily learn in school. Participants felt that there was a need to raise awareness of this with employers, who were perceived to some times lack commitment to these types of initiatives (potential reasons for this lack of commitment included lack of awareness, lack of willingness, lack of time and resources to mentor youth in the workplace).

Participants also felt that efforts must be made to understand why youth are leaving and to educate them on why they should return.

- **Out-migration of youth:** participants felt that New Brunswick is faced with a double-edged challenge, whereby over-qualified youth are leaving the province, while many of those who stay are unemployed/ underemployed as a result of not having the skill profile required by available jobs. Participants also felt that efforts must be made to understand why youth are leaving and to educate them on why they should return (e.g., available opportunities, lower cost of living, quality of life, etc.). They also noted that while most of New Brunswick youth would like to stay in the province, or at least come back, the key decision factor for them is usually access to adequate salaries and conditions. In short, they added, the decision is ultimately an economic one – it has to be worthwhile for them to stay or come home.

Some Opportunities for Action....

Giving youth a voice:

- One participant noted, by way of example, that groups such as the Fédération de la jeunesse du N.-B. (FJFNB) and the Société des Acadiens et Acadiennes du N.-B. (SAANB) have created programs aimed at giving youth a prominent voice in places like municipal councils (FJFNB) or on their boards (SAANB). It was felt that this was a good first step in the right direction.
- Another participant cited an initiative where a panel of “returning young New Brunswickers” had been created, to understand why they had left and what had motivated them to return to the province.

4.2 Immigration

Many participants felt that immigration, while important, was secondary to the need to retain or repatriate the province's youth.

Participants discussed the potential role of immigrants in addressing some of the province's skills and labour force-related issues, or as a way to “grow the workforce.” They highlighted that it will be critical to coordinate local, regional and provincial efforts to attract and retain immigrants if any progress is to be made in this area. In addition, participants felt that the focus should be on retaining those who come, more than on attracting larger numbers of immigrants. In particular, participants felt that:

- It is important to help newcomers access the labour market and ensure that they have equal opportunities to quality employment (recognition



of their credentials is a critical barrier).

- Addressing the issues that cause youth to leave, i.e., access to good, well paying jobs, would by default help attract and retain immigrants.
- Cultural barriers impact immigrants' willingness to come and remain in New Brunswick, since they typically seek communities where they can be with their peers.
- Immigration patterns must be managed: urban areas have too many immigrants, while rural areas do not have enough immigration. In addition, immigration changes the dynamic of a region and people must be equipped to deal with this positively. In particular, it is important to dispel the many myths that people hold with respect to immigrants and the impact of immigration.

It should be noted however that many participants felt that while immigration is important, it is secondary to the need to retain or repatriate the province's youth. As one participant put it: "I don't see why we need immigration when we're exporting our youth."

Some Opportunities for Action...

Coordination of efforts

- The establishment (and stable funding for) of a permanent provincial Immigration Council.

4.3 Women

Some participants pointed out that the needs, role and place of women in the workforce is different from that of men. They highlighted the following:

Participants pointed out that the needs, role and place of women in the workforce is different from that of men.

- While there is currently a large focus on trades, university-trained professions, entrepreneurship and public sector are large employers of women (e.g., many of the employment growth sectors listed in the workbook are traditionally female occupations, many of which are university trained).
- Government social and economic policies have important consequences for women and their ability to participate actively in the workforce. The cost of childcare (or the lack of a national childcare strategy) is an example of this.
- If the problem is also one of declining birth rates, creating an environment with favourable work and family policies could help correct this. As one participant put it: "Women will have more children if they feel supported both at work and at home."



4.4 Trades

When discussing the question of workforce participation in trades, participants observed that trades are still not perceived to be or recognized as a legitimate and valuable career path (e.g., by youth, parents, school counsellors). They called for a renewed focus on trades and vocational training and noted that:

Participants noted that trades are not perceived to be or recognized as a legitimate and valuable career path and called for a renewed focus on trades and vocational training.

- The decision, in the 1980's, to eliminate trades from school (and some community college) curricula has had a devastating impact on the province's supply of skilled trades people. Many trade courses (e.g., hairdressing) are now only available in private colleges, at a cost of \$10,000 - \$12,000 – an important barrier to access for many (especially since financial assistance through programs such as E.I. is only available to a limited proportion of potential students).
- The criteria for accessing jobs are becoming increasingly stringent. In some cases, where someone once needed a two-year college degree, they now often need an undergraduate degree.
- Apprenticeship programs do not always represent an attractive prospect, as a large number of hours are required in order for one to progress, starting salaries are low, and conditions are not always optimal.

Some Opportunities for Action...

Incentives

- Some participants suggested providing supports and incentives (e.g. tax deductions, allowances, scholarships, etc.) to encourage students to pursue training in high-demand trades or vocational courses.

4.5 Role of the Employer

Some participants discussed the role of employers in addressing the province's skills needs in the context of its aging workforce. As outlined below, they discussed the need for employers to "take ownership of and show leadership on" this issue and the unique challenges faced by small and mid-sized businesses (SMBs) in this regard:

Participants discussed the need for employers to "take ownership of and show leadership" on labour market issues.

- **Employer ownership and leadership:** those at the dialogue felt that employers had a responsibility to contribute to workforce development. They indicated that employers must recognize the importance of investing in their employees and of providing competitive working conditions and benefits (e.g., retention of key employees is largely a matter of salaries) and felt that they should be encouraged to do so (e.g., through government incentives or supports). They also added that employer loyalty to workers and to the community is important, particularly for employers new to the province or those whose head offices are located outside the province.



Participants highlighted that SMBs face different challenges than larger businesses.

- ***Small and mid-sized businesses:*** participants highlighted that SMBs face different challenges than larger businesses and that they represent an important proportion of the province's employers. 97% of New Brunswick SMBs employ five or less and 60% of businesses in the Moncton area are SMBs. Lack of time, they felt, is usually more a problem for SMBs than money can be (e.g. when it comes to training, researching this issue, etc.). They also indicated that SMBs do not fully appreciate the extent of the skills challenge and the impact this will have on them moving forward, particularly with respect to succession planning. They felt SMBs need to be educated on skills issues in order to mobilize them to act before a true crisis arises.





5. Economic Development

Participants saw economic development as the foundation on which solutions to the province's skills challenges can be built.

Participants in the New Brunswick provincial dialogue saw economic development as the foundation on which solutions to the province's skills challenges can be built. Indeed, they felt strongly that access to quality and meaningful work opportunities was fundamental to attracting, developing, and retaining a productive workforce. They discussed both the need for a focused economic development strategy and the importance of addressing the fact that too many New Brunswickers are currently unemployed, underemployed, or working in precarious employment.

Attendees also highlighted the seriousness of the challenges faced by Northern New Brunswick, and the important rural/urban dichotomy that characterizes the province. Participants' comments on each of these topics are summarized below, as are some of the opportunities for action they identified.

5.1 Economic Development Strategy

Participants identified the need for a concerted, collaborative approach to economic development that would be guided by a clearly articulated long-term vision and strategy.

With regards to economic development, participants felt that Atlantic Canada's economy is at a turning point and that the time for action is now. They noted that the province's history shows that its past economic successes have been the result of a coordinated industrial strategy. They identified a need for a concerted, collaborative approach to economic development that would be guided by a clearly articulated long-term vision and strategy. Attendees called for better coordination of economic development efforts across all stakeholders, with a focus on community-based approaches. They commented that regional economic development requires a solid and stable economic engine, citing as an example a mine in Bathurst, which created jobs as well as a market for a large number of SMBs that supported it. Now that the mine is closing, they added, there is cascading effect on the community. Finally, participants stressed that stakeholders have been speaking about these issues for a long time and they felt that it was imperative that a timeframe for action be defined that progress be measured/evaluated on an ongoing basis.

Participants also highlighted the following factors which they felt must be considered when assessing economic development approaches:

- New Brunswick is the only Atlantic province to have three economic centres, with the Northern region dealing with radically poorer conditions. This means competition across the three southern centres,



and fewer resources available to support the North.

- Governments are not job creators. Their role should be to create a climate for investment, conditions to encourage new business (e.g., regulatory framework, fiscal policies, etc.) and ensure that workers are equipped to take those jobs (e.g., ensuring that everyone has the required foundational skills).
- New Brunswick prides itself on having the lowest corporate taxes after Alberta, but government must ensure that such policies do not happen “on the back of workers and small businesses that are struggling.”
- Larger forces are at play and it is imperative that stakeholders understand the global context in which they operate (e.g., economic, international trade or environmental issues) – “We must think global, act local.”
- An economic development strategy must be balanced, important for the province/region – and doable. It must focus on a very concrete project and include both an economic/business plan and a human resource plan.

Participants also emphasized the importance of raising awareness of the impending challenges with all stakeholders, in order to mobilize them towards change.

Participants also emphasized the importance of raising awareness of the impending challenges with all stakeholders, in order to mobilize them towards change. They noted that “we are all responsible, we all have a role to play” and felt that more room had to be made for productivity, innovation, and creativity. In addition, they spoke of the importance of building a sense of solidarity and pride in the province and called for shifts in what are too often negative or defeatist attitudes.

Some Opportunities for Action...

Concerted, collaborative action

- Participants noted that the WPP exercise would last another two years before it wraps up. They asked the plenary as a whole who, in the short term, will take up the model and move it forward in New Brunswick?
- Participants pointed to the Bathurst Public Forum as a positive example of concerted action and collaboration. This event, initiated by Labour and supported by local business and mayors, brought together all stakeholders to try to identify solutions to the very real economic and out-migration problems faced by the North (although participants highlighted that the absence of support from the provincial government for that event was an obvious gap – and a symptom of the province’s lack of commitment to these issues).
- The first step would be to learn from our past successes (e.g., the Caisses Populaires model) and best practices in other, similar jurisdictions (e.g., the Beauce region in Québec).

Solidarity

- Some at the dialogue cited “buy local” campaigns as examples of ways to build a sense of regional solidarity (e.g., work being done in this direction in the North, with “Ma péninsule, j’y crois”). They cited Québec’s Beauce region as a prime example of how such strategies helped turn the tide for a region that has a very similar profile to many New Brunswick regions, including the North.



Economic diversification

- Some participants suggested the need to explore opportunities to diversify the province's economy, e.g. exporting products and services outside New Brunswick, and not just to the United States – Alberta can be a promising market for engineering, software, etc. firms.
- Others felt that a job creation strategy could include tactics such as putting pressure on the federal government to decentralize more of its services and encouraging entrepreneurship.

Taxation

- Some participants suggested that firms that generate large profits should pay more taxes, thus generating additional revenue that could be reinvested in the local economy and smaller or less profitable businesses.

5.2 Quality of employment

Participants suggested that when one considers not only the unemployed but also the underemployed, those in precarious positions, vulnerable workers and those who have left in search of better opportunities – this paints a much more dire (and realistic) picture of the situation in New Brunswick. They also noted that precarious employment and underemployment are on the rise in New Brunswick and saw unemployment as being a structural problem that lies at the heart of the economic development question.

Participants noted that precarious employment and underemployment are on the rise in New Brunswick and saw unemployment as being a structural problem which lies at the heart of the economic development question.

They cited a number of factors that may have contributed to the situation:

- Shifts in the province's economy that have led to large North-South migration within the province, increasing the disparities between the two regions.
- The fact that the province's call centre strategy had shifted workers away from resource-sector jobs, with some wondering whether this represented an improvement for the province's economy and workers.
- The public sector's casual-worker policy, which they felt had caused an increase in precarious work and, as a result, was a disincentive to considering a career in the public service, particularly for youth (which is one of the provinces most important employers).
- The important social repercussions and costs of unemployment/underemployment, e.g., an increasing number of families with two working parents leading to increased demand for childcare, absenteeism, decreased productivity, etc.

Participants felt that action must be taken to help prevent the marginalization of a generation of workers and emphasized that the challenge was not only to create jobs, but rather, to create quality employment opportunities. In addition, participants said that this had to go hand in hand with New Brunswick offering a good quality of life by prioritizing things like fair-living wages, better pensions, job security, childcare, health care, a clean environment and pay equity. This, they felt, was key if the province is to compete effectively with Alberta and Ontario for skilled workers.



Some Opportunities for Action...

Being creative in our definition of “quality” employment

- Some participants suggested that becoming “preferred” employers is a powerful way to attract and retain key employees. Creativity in terms of compensation packages and working conditions may offer “win-win” solutions that meet the needs of employees, while not representing a drain on employer resources. Employers need better access to information on best practices and models that work.
- Others felt that employers could play a more active role in influencing government policies that affect workers (e.g., lobbying in favour of improved childcare).
- Many suggested that employers should simply ask employees what is important to them (e.g., explore if there are other benefits, quality of life issues, etc. that are important to them vs. focusing on wages exclusively).

5.3 Rural/Urban Disparities

Participants pointed out that the local labour market and economic conditions in particular areas of the province had to be better understood and communicated, because there was a tendency to broadly portray the overall condition of the province as favourable. It was reiterated that not all parts of the provinces were faring equally well and that the North is facing particular problems that must not be ignored. As one participant bluntly stated: “the South is prospering, the North is dying.” Participants added that:

Participants highlighted that not all parts of the provinces were faring equally well and that the North is facing particular problems that must not be ignored.

- Youth out-migration is a particular problem for the northern region, as are general educational levels and literacy.
- Part of the challenge is that there are currently unfilled positions in the North, but this is not well known.
- Any solution will have to be based on a balanced approach. It will also require changes in attitude: people need to accept that they have the power to shape their destiny.
- Provincial infrastructure is critical to economic development, e.g. airports and roads. The North is particularly underserved in this regard (especially with regards to road conditions) and there is no budget left to address this very important problem for the North. The construction of the Moncton-Fredericton highway, for example, has left the province with a 30-year mortgage.

On the other hand, and at a broader level, some participants indicated that if there are common concerns and needs across the Atlantic region, then it might be time for people to start looking at ways to work together across the Atlantic region.



5.4 Small to mid-sized businesses (SMBs)/Entrepreneurs

Participants felt that SMBs and entrepreneurs could play an important role in job creation.

Participants felt that SMBs and entrepreneurs could play an important role in job creation. They also felt that governments, but also Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade, could encourage SMBs and entrepreneurs to engage in creative thinking about the types of incentives they could offer to workers, the ways in which they could do so and strategies they could adopt to enhance their capacity for job creation and action on labour market issues.

Some Opportunities for Action...

Supports to SMBs

- SMBs could be encouraged to form “clusters” around shared needs, pooling their resources to strengthen their capacity to innovate in the workplace and deal with common challenges.
- Enhance SMBs/ entrepreneurs’ capacity for job creation and action on labour market issues through easier access to loans, grants, and assistance with succession planning.





6. Education and Training

Participants in the New Brunswick provincial dialogue saw education and training as a pivotal topic and a major driver for economic and workforce development.

Participants also stressed the importance of improved coordination across stakeholders to ensure the education system fulfills its role of preparing workers for the labour market.

Participants in the New Brunswick provincial dialogue saw education and training as a pivotal topic and a major driver for economic and workforce development. They emphasized the importance of “making the case” for education and training with all stakeholders: government (elected politicians and bureaucrats), business, labour, educational institutions, communities and civil society. They felt strongly that education and training were key to the province’s competitiveness and should therefore be seen as an investment in the province’s future and not as a short-term cost.

Many felt that the time had come to conduct a review of the province’s education system, both in terms of its structure and infrastructure: the former from the perspective of a “K-lifelong learning” continuum, to understand and address the gaps and barriers at each milestone of the education and personal/professional development cycle; the latter in terms of facilities and resources. Participants called for a thorough assessment of current capacity and a better understanding of what was required. As one participant stated: “Who is the client, which needs are we trying to meet?”. Participants also reiterated the need for good governance, e.g. setting clear priorities and closely tracking and evaluating the performance of the system as a whole.

Participants also stressed the importance of improved coordination across stakeholders (business, labour, government, the education system, communities and parents) to ensure the education system fulfills its role of preparing workers for the labour market. In addition, they highlighted the importance of identifying and adopting local solutions: approaches that are appropriate for New Brunswick and not ones which were devised and implemented by Ontario or Quebec.

As outlined below, participants also discussed the need for improved coordination amongst stakeholders, the capacity and accessibility of the education system, the need for more trades graduates, and the importance of workplace training. Finally, participants reiterated the importance of addressing literacy and essential skills issues, noting that in this regard, New Brunswick’s record was the worst in the country.



6.1 Stakeholder Coordination

Participants saw a role here for government (both elected officials and bureaucrats), business, labour, educational institutions (both private and public), communities, and parents.

Participants recognized the importance of coordination and collaboration across all relevant stakeholders to enhance the performance of the education system, and its ability to meet current and projected workforce needs. They saw a role here for government (both elected officials and bureaucrats), business, labour, educational institutions (both private and public), communities and parents. They stressed that coordinating the needs and efforts of all these stakeholders was required if the education system was to meet the needs of current and future workers, as well as those of employers. They also indicated that if these stakeholders were to successfully work together, it was imperative that they learned to better understand each other's needs, challenges and possible contributions. They added that:

- There is also a need for more awareness of the needs and expectations of all the players.
- The timeliness of interventions in the workplace is partly a function of the relationship between management and labour.
- Silos within the education itself, i.e. colleges, universities, high schools, must be broken down (e.g., universities and colleges collaboration around credit recognition and budget allocation).
- Business must play a role in helping to identify training needs, but can also play a role in curriculum design and implementation/delivery.
- Openness, transparency, communication, leadership, and trust are key success factors.

Some Opportunities for Action...

Coordinating body

- Some of those at the dialogue felt that greater coordination and collaboration and more exchanges between stakeholders could best be achieved by the creation of an independent body. Although participants did not describe what such an entity might look like, some cited the now defunct NBLFDB as an example, while others pointed to Enterprise St-John or Fredericton's Immigration project as smaller-scale, but effective, approaches.

Stakeholder communication

- Some suggested that an effective marketing and communications plan would be required to inform and mobilize relevant stakeholders.
- Participants cited, by way of example, the need to clarify expectations of parents or of labour; to help people understand the challenges faced by business, the precariousness of the environment in which it must operate; or to create more links between school and industry (e.g., by bringing professionals into schools and educators into the workplace).



6.2 Capacity of the Education System

Participants felt that the education system is not equipped to handle the current demand for skilled trades training and that there is a general lack of funding for and commitment to training and skills development. They also felt that the education system is generally not flexible enough to react rapidly to business and market needs: by the time it adapts, it is already too late or the needs have changed. As a result, demand for spaces largely exceed supply and there are an insufficient number of graduates in high-demand fields (e.g., trades, health care). Participants suggested that there was an urgent need to identify and target short-term and long-term requirements, an exercise they felt would necessitate both accurate and timely labour market information on which to base decisions and a clear champion or owner for these decisions.

Participants felt that the education system is not equipped to handle the current demand for skilled trades training and that there is a general lack of funding for and commitment to training and skills development.

Discussions on the capacity of the education system generated many comments on the province's community college system. As one participant put it, "[New Brunswick Community College] (NBCC) is the best-kept secret in the province", but it is unable to meet demands due to limitations created by its current regional structure (e.g., rural campuses are not at capacity while urban campuses are overflowing), lack of funding, and a general lack of capacity to meet current demands for trades and technologies graduates.

Participants also noted that political and funding decisions had led to the privatization of many trades courses (e.g. essentially leading to such training being offered by private colleges instead of by the NBCC). This, they felt, had led to the creation of important barriers to access, as many private courses are expensive (e.g., a hairdressing course now costs approximately \$10,000 in a private college). Participants felt that this situation was partially the result of E.I. policies, because private colleges charge what E.I. will pay for specific courses. However, they added, only a limited number of students are eligible for that funding. The rest, including all those who are currently working and who would like to re-skill/retrain, must pay out of pocket and often graduate with large debts.

6.3 Accessibility of education and training

Participants noted that barriers to access to education can be geographic (rural vs. urban), linguistic (French vs. English, immigrants) and financial (cost of programs, lack of financial supports for students). They also noted that:

Participants noted that barriers to access to education can be geographic, linguistic and financial.

- There are barriers for those in the workforce or in transition, e.g., E.I. funding for training is only available to those who have lost their job. There is nothing available to support workers who want to reskill or retrain.
- Education should be learner-centred, and not program-centred. For example, recognizing the age, experience and needs of adults who are not used to being in a formal and traditional learning environment.



Similarly, educational institutions and employers must be more flexible in recognizing immigrants' credentials or skills acquired by individuals outside of work or formal training through life experience, volunteering or tradition (e.g., PLAR - prior learning and acquisition recognition).

Participants pointed to the need to explore alternative delivery models for education and training.

- English/French as a second language training for immigrants is critical to their integration in society and the labour market, but funding for this is limited and/or split between the 3 major urban centres.

Participants discussed various approaches to reducing barriers to access for education and training. These included exploring alternative delivery models (e.g., online, use of satellite facilities) and addressing specific barriers faced by groups such as youth, immigrants and those already in the workforce who might require training. In particular, participants highlighted the importance of ensuring that those already in the labour market had an equal right to and (financial) support for education and training.

Some Opportunities for Action...

Private student assistance

- Some participants felt that business and/or labour could play a greater role in making education more accessible, for example by providing assistance in the form of scholarships or creating more co-op positions.

Flexible delivery models

- Some participants highlighted the merits of flexible delivery models, such as making more use of on-site / on-the-job training or of non-traditional delivery methods such as online training or video-conferencing,
- Others suggested the creation of technological training centres of excellence with satellite facilities (to meet rural needs),
- Others suggested maximizing the use of existing facilities, for example, schools could operate from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Support for workers who wish to train/retrain

- Participants cited the importance of job security while one is on training or of access to personal supports such as childcare and transportation assistance.

6.4 Trades

Participants felt that there was a need to re-examine the role that parents and guidance counsellors play in guiding the professional choices of young people.

Dialogue members recognized the current shortage of skilled trades people in New Brunswick and felt that there was a need to re-examine the role that parents and guidance counsellors play in guiding the professional choices of young people. They called for a renewed emphasis on the trades and other vocations and for the creation of closer ties between schools, colleges, universities, labour organisations, and business/industry. At the same time, they also felt that attracting youth to the trades would depend on providing them with better information on the trades and the benefits of this career path.



Some Opportunities for Action...

Early intervention and awareness building in schools

- Participants cited the need to create more opportunities for youth, guidance counsellors and parents to learn about trades: career days; increased visibility of trades in school curricula; work-based opportunities such as apprenticeships, co-op, job shadowing, etc. Participants also emphasized that such awareness building should start at the elementary school level.

6.5 Workplace Training

Participants felt that business and labour had an important role to play in the training field.

Participants felt that business and labour had an important role to play in the training field, stating that they are responsible for helping workers acquire workplace-specific skills and ensuring the transferability of skills acquired in other organizations or in the education system (e.g. through apprenticeships). They also noted that workplace training can be an effective strategy to address literacy issues. Finally, participants indicated that workplace training must be flexible and take into account the way people learn (e.g., older vs. younger workers; immigrants).

Some Opportunities for Action...

Workplace literacy

- Workplace literacy initiatives have been shown to have very positive results for both the employee and the employer (e.g., it is a good incentive for people to get promoted, it improves productivity, etc.). Some participants suggested that workplace literacy training should be considered as a complement (not a replacement) for literacy strategies at the community level. As such, they called on government to provide more supports/incentives to employers and labour to deliver more workplace literacy training.

6.6 Literacy and Essential Workplace Skills

Participants indicated that literacy is a problem that must be addressed in the province's schools.

Participants indicated that literacy is a problem that must be addressed in the province's schools. They felt that too many people are graduating without the basic literacy skills and noted that in some northern regions, the proportions are particularly high. As a result, too many adult workers have insufficient literacy skills and are left behind. Participants also felt that essential workplace skills should be taught in high school.





7. Strategic Considerations

Participants felt that while identifying and implementing solutions was critical, this could only be achieved if certain key strategic conditions were met.

In addition to the three topics discussed in the previous sections, a number of strategic considerations were also raised by participants of the New Brunswick provincial dialogue. Participants felt that while identifying and implementing solutions was critical, this could only be achieved if certain key strategic conditions were met. In particular, participants noted that:

- To succeed, any solution initiative must have an owner or a “champion” who can provide leadership and coordination and draw people together (several of the participants actually asked the others whether someone was interested in working on these issues henceforth).
- It is important to take into account the broader context in which we live, e.g., “think globally, act locally.”
- Change requires ownership of the issue by all stakeholders, or as one group of participants put it, “we must be advocates for change ourselves.” It also requires greater collaboration, communication, and provincial/regional cooperation.
- While the provincial dialogue focused on the issue of skills needs in the context of New Brunswick’s aging workforce, it is important to keep in mind that this issue has broader social implications. We must continue working towards our dream of a social and equitable Canada and New Brunswick, to meet our goals for a fair-living wage, security, pensions, childcare, health care, a clean environment – the “quality of life” issues that are at the heart of Canada’s social fabric.

Participants spoke of ownership and leadership, stating that “we must be advocates for change ourselves.”

Participants noted that the province’s ability to successfully deal with the issue of skills needs in the context of an aging workforce will require strong commitment on the part of the provincial government. They also felt that success could only be achieved through an overarching labour market vision and strategy for the province, which should in turn be built upon accurate labour market information.

7.1 Role of government

Participants felt that the provincial government has shirked its responsibilities on labour market issues. While some felt that nothing could move forward without government participation, others felt that if the



Participants noted that the province's ability to successfully deal with the issue of skills needs in the context of an aging workforce will require strong commitment on the part of the provincial government.

government is not willing to take ownership of some of these labour market challenges, then it is up to the stakeholders to get involved and take the lead. Participants suggested that:

- There is a lack of political commitment and leadership on labour market issues at the provincial level.
- There is a lack of coordination within and across governments. It is often very difficult to obtain information and support or to know which door to knock on. There is too much red tape.
- The political reality is very unstable and changes with each government or election every four years or so. It is therefore difficult to define and implement a long-term plan. This has led to a "do it yourself" attitude among non-government stakeholders (e.g., tri-city agreement on immigration).

Some Opportunities for Action...

Political commitment

- Participants suggested that if labour market issues are to be recognized as critical and addressed as such, there should be a provincial minister of Work or Labour.

7.2 Labour market vision for New Brunswick

Participants noted that while skills needs and the aging workforce are provincial and regional issues, they are also part of a nation-wide problem. They added that the situation is fast approaching crisis state and there is an immediate need for action. They also stressed that action must be guided by a clear vision for the labour market that is understood and supported by all stakeholders. In addition, participants indicated that:

Participants stressed that action must be guided by a clear provincial vision for the labour market that is understood and supported by all stakeholders.

- The province needs to determine how it will compete, taking internal (e.g., provincial demographics and economy) and external (e.g., globalization challenges) factors into account.
- There needs to be a focus on "population building" – developing the population at all ages through literacy, education and training for now and the future.

Finally, some of those at the dialogue stated that the focus on the aging population might be misguided, pointing out that a large part of the province's demographic challenges are in fact due to falling birth rates. As a result, they noted, we have to be careful of how we define the problem before we propose solutions, as an "aging population" strategy will differ from a "falling birth rates" strategy. Participants added that while an aging population does pose certain challenges, it also presents some opportunities (e.g., retired people still pay taxes, spend money, etc.). As such, they felt that focusing exclusively on the "aging" aspect of the issue might be an alarmist perspective.



7.3 Labour Market Information (LMI)

Participants often highlighted that business, government, educators and others are unaware of the gaps between needs and available skills (e.g., construction, transportation, cooks, etc.). The challenge, they said, is to strike a better balance between the supply of workers and the needs of labour market in order to build a balanced labour market strategy, thus avoiding peaks and valleys.

Participants spoke of the importance of collecting and disseminating timely, accurate labour market information to help all stakeholders in their planning and decision-making. They noted that while forecasting is very difficult, it is also crucial. In addition, they stressed the need for both industry/sectoral data as well as a more global, crosscutting view of the situation. Finally, they stated that relevant, timely, and accurate labour market information would be a by-product of effective stakeholder coordination and communication. They noted that:

Participants spoke of the importance of collecting and disseminating timely, accurate labour market information to help all stakeholders in their planning and decision-making.

- Government must take ownership of the LMI challenge and work in partnership with those who can help generate and disseminate LMI.
- Business has the responsibility of articulating and communicating its current and projected needs to education/labour/employment counsellors (SMBs will require assistance to participate in this process e.g., from Chambers of Commerce, Boards of Trade).
- Youth, school counsellors, parents, and others will benefit from good LMI, if presented in a format that is accessible to them, e.g. what is a machinist? Many do not know what various trades require in terms of skills and education. Similarly, they do not know where the opportunities are today and where they are projected to be in the future.
- Labour market information must be revisited and updated on a regular basis, if it is to remain useful.

Some Opportunities for Action...

Labour market information (LMI)

- Participants recommended the development of regional cooperation/communication mechanisms to collect, analyze and distribute LMI to all stakeholders (e.g., employers, labour, government, educators, etc.). They saw a role here for organizations such as Chambers of Commerce, Boards of Trades, labour organizations and local educational institutions. They also suggested that this LMI be used to create guides/materials to be used in various sectors.
- Participants suggested tackling the problem at a regional level, e.g., by setting the goal to collect accurate regional data for today and for one year from now.





8. Pre- / Post-dialogue Surveys

As previously indicated, dialogue participants were asked to fill out two questionnaires, which would provide additional and more quantifiable assessments of their perspectives. A pre-dialogue questionnaire was administered on the morning of the deliberative dialogue, prior to the start of the dialogue proceedings. A post-dialogue questionnaire, containing the same set of questions as the first, was administered at the end of the deliberative dialogue.

In each of the Atlantic provinces dialogue sessions, a large majority of participants felt that current problems related to skills needs and the aging workforce were serious. Looking out five years, participants believed that such problems would remain as serious issues in their respective provinces.

There are several methodological considerations to keep in mind when considering the findings from the pre- and post-dialogue surveys. The findings for each province are based on small sample sizes. As a result, small percentage point differences (for example, in the percentage of respondents “agreeing” with a given issue) are actually reflecting differences between only one or two respondents. The number of participants answering the pre-dialogue questionnaire differed from the number answering the post-dialogue questionnaire. The comparison of pre- and post-dialogue findings must therefore be treated with caution. A more detailed commentary on the methodological considerations can be found in Appendix 3 to this report.

The following provides a summary of key findings across the four Atlantic provinces, as well as New Brunswick specific data.

8.1 Summary of Key Findings (Regional)

In each of the Atlantic provinces dialogue sessions, a large majority of participants felt that current problems related to skills needs and the aging workforce were serious. Looking out five years, participants believed that such problems would remain as serious issues in their respective provinces. The conversations held during the deliberative dialogue seemed to reinforce these views.

An overwhelming majority of dialogue participants indicated that responsibility for ensuring their province has the skilled workers it needs is a shared one. While specific comments recorded in the dialogue surveys often cited the need for leadership by government, responses invariably pointed out that all parties – government, business, labour, education, and the NGO community – have a role to play in addressing skills needs.



An overwhelming majority of dialogue participants indicated that responsibility for ensuring their province has the skilled workers it needs is a shared one.

Through their survey responses, dialogue participants signalled the importance of “many actions on many fronts” when it comes to addressing their province’s skills needs. Actions that would encourage investments and participation in training and education; actions that would remove barriers to labour force participation for the unemployed or address literacy issues; actions that would enhance innovation and entrepreneurship; actions that would retain young people and better inform them about career options; all of these were viewed as “important” elements in dealing with skills needs. Not surprisingly, the vast majority of participants disagreed that inaction, or letting market forces resolve the issues, was an option.

The only action that was not judged to be important by a majority of participants was “encourage older workers to continue working for several more years.”

The only action that was not judged to be important by a majority of participants was “encourage older workers to continue working for several more years.”

Although participants viewed many actions as important in addressing skills needs, there were particular actions that received high levels of endorsement as priorities. Foremost among these is *improving coordination across business, labour, government and the education system*. In every Atlantic province, this was the most commonly selected priority action.

Ensuring that young people understand the benefits of working in the skilled trades and encouraging higher education and lifelong learning also received high levels of endorsement in each of the Atlantic provinces, ranking among the top 5 priorities in each province.

While a majority of dialogue participants felt that *attracting more immigrants with the job skills we need was important*, it was seldom selected as a priority.

8.2 Most Important Economic Problem (Provincial)

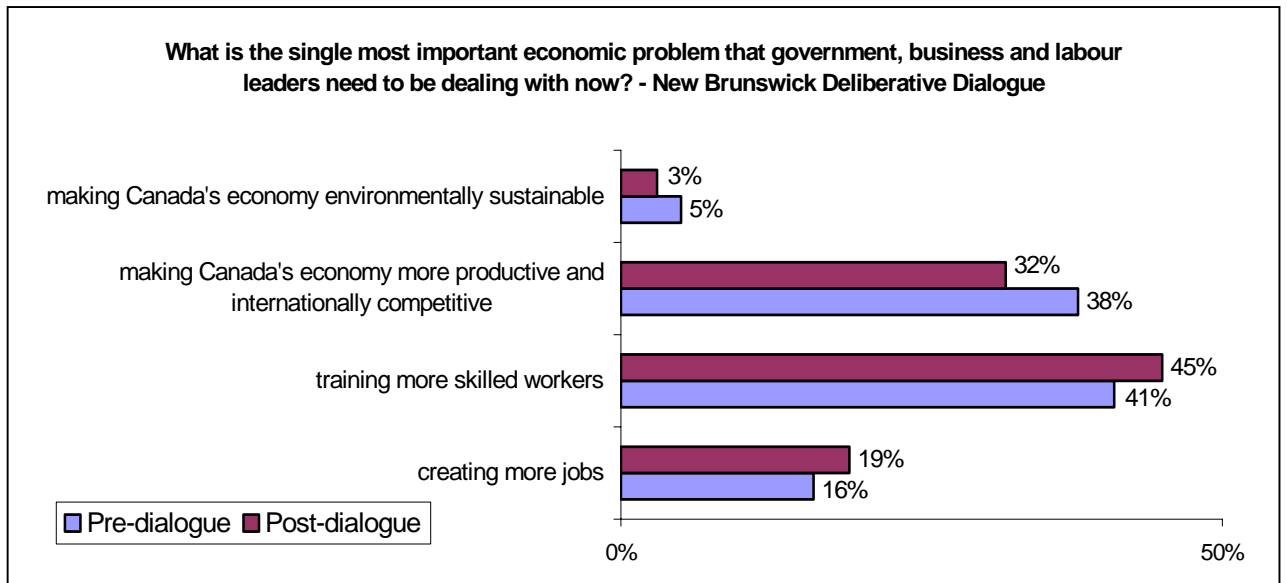
Participants were most likely to choose “training more skilled workers” as the single most important economic problem.

In both the pre- and post-dialogue questionnaires, New Brunswick participants were most likely to choose “training more skilled workers” as the single most important economic problem requiring the attention of government, business and labour.

While the pre- and post-dialogue surveys yielded similar results for the participant group as a whole, there were significant shifts in the views of individual participants. Of those participants who answered both questionnaires, 43% had changed their view over the course of the day. One-half of participants who changed their views moved to “training more skilled workers” as the most important problem.”



Pre- and Post-dialogue Priorities: Most Important Economic Problem



8.3 High Priority Actions (Provincial)

Participants in the deliberative dialogue sessions were asked to gauge the importance of 13 different actions that could be used to address skills needs and the aging workforce:

1. Stem the out-migration of young people.
2. Attract more immigrants with the job skills we need.
3. Do nothing – let the market forces naturally resolve the issue.
4. Provide better supports to those who may face barriers to entering the labour market (e.g. the long-term unemployed, minority communities, those with literacy problems, Aboriginal people, etc.)
5. Encourage older workers to continue working for several more years.
6. Encourage higher education and lifelong learning.
7. Create decent and secure job opportunities for people.
8. Increase economic productivity through investments in R&D and training.
9. Encourage innovation and entrepreneurship.
10. Improve coordination across business, labour, government and the education system.
11. Encourage employers to provide more and better training to their employees.
12. Address literacy and numeracy issues in the general population.
13. Ensure that young people understand the benefits and rewards of working in the skilled construction trades, like plumbing and carpentry.

Participants were asked to gauge the importance of 13 different actions that could be used to address skills needs and the aging workforce.



Each action was evaluated along a five-point scale ranging from “not at all important” to “very important.” In addition, participants were asked to specify from the list of 13, the three actions that they felt were priorities. Participants carried out the evaluation and prioritization exercise in both the pre- and post-dialogue questionnaires.

Although the dialogue participants placed importance on a variety of actions in dealing with skills needs, there were particular actions that were more likely than others to be described as “very important.” In addition, there were some actions that were much more likely than others to be identified as priorities. Based on this, New Brunswick participants’ “Top 5” priorities were as follows:

- 1. *Improve Co-ordination across Business, Labour, Government and the Education System:*** This action was the most commonly selected priority in both the pre- and post-dialogue surveys. At the close of the deliberative dialogue session, eight out of ten participants judged this action to be “very important” in addressing skills needs and the aging population.
- 2. *Ensure Young People Understand the Benefits of Working in the Skilled Trades:*** In both the pre- and post-dialogue surveys, this action was among the five most commonly selected priorities. Its ranking increased from 5th in the pre-dialogue to 2nd in the post-dialogue survey. The percentage of respondents saying the action is “very important” similarly increased, from 47% to 62%.
- 3. *Stem the Out-migration of Young People:*** This action was among the five most commonly selected priorities in both the pre- and post-dialogue surveys, even though the percentage of respondents judging it to be a “very important” action fell from 66% to 30%. Further analysis shows that for every 10 people who judged this to be a very important action at the start of the dialogue session, 6 had changed their evaluation after the dialogue session, with most describing the issue as “important” rather than “very important”.
- 4. *Encourage Higher Education and Lifelong Learning:*** Three out of 10 dialogue participants chose this action as a priority. More than one-half (59%) judged the issue to be “very important.”
- 5. *Create Decent and Secure Job Opportunities for People:*** Seven out of ten respondents in the post-dialogue survey felt this action was “very important” in addressing skills needs and the aging workforce. Both before and after the deliberative dialogue session, the need to create decent job opportunities was among the top five most commonly selected priority actions.

“Improve Co-ordination across business, labour, government and the education system” was the most commonly selected priority in both the pre- and post-dialogue surveys.



What They Said...

One of the most prevalent themes in the comments noted by participants in the pre- and post-dialogue surveys addresses the need for collaborative partnerships to deal with skills needs and the aging workforce:

- "Government has much control and resources but needs to work with business and labour and education who can also contribute." *New Brunswick business participant*
- "I think everyone has to work together. There is no emphasis at the school level to even address some of the great and needed occupations in trades." *New Brunswick education participant*
- "Developing skills involves early education for learning the basics. Employers need to invest in workers; government incentives and trade unions should also be a part." *New Brunswick labour participant*

8.4 Moderate Priority Actions (Provincial)

Of the 13 actions participants were asked to evaluate in the pre- and post-dialogue questionnaires, there were five that that received more moderate endorsement as priorities:

- Addressing literacy and numeracy issues in the general population;
- Increasing economic productivity through investments in R&D and training;
- Encouraging employers to provide more and better training;
- Providing better supports to those facing barriers entering the labour market; and;
- Encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship.

While a sizable share of participants described these actions as "very important" (between 35% and 64%), relatively few participants selected these items as priority actions. However, it should be noted that although "addressing literacy issues" ranked 6th among the 13 actions, it could arguably be included among the group of action with high levels of endorsement. It was selected by 30% of post-dialogue survey respondents as a priority issue, and more than 64% of post-dialogue respondents judged it to be a "very important" action. Many who did not see it as a priority in the pre-dialogue, had altered their evaluation by the end of the dialogue session.

8.5 Low Priority Actions (Provincial)

The three options/actions that were least likely to be viewed as priority actions were "attract more immigrants with the jobs skills we need," "encourage older workers to continue working for several more years," and "do nothing – let the market forces naturally resolve the issue".



DRAFT

What emerges from the pre- and post-dialogue survey results is that a multifaceted strategy in dealing with skills needs and the aging workforce would likely find support among the dialogue participants in each of the Atlantic provinces.

The table below provides detailed information on how participants ranked each of the challenges in their pre- and post-dialogue surveys.

Priority Actions: Pre- and Post-deliberative Dialogue

Action	% saying action is "Very Important"			% saying action is a priority			RANK (based on % saying action is a priority)		
	Pre-dialogue	Post-dialogue	Pre-dialogue	Pre-dialogue	Post-dialogue	Pre-dialogue	Post-dialogue	Change in rank (pre minus post)	
Improve coordination across business labour government and the education system	69%	79%	50%	60%	1	1	0		
Ensure young people understand benefits of working in the skilled trades	47%	62%	27%	35%	5	2	3		
Stem the out-migration of young people	66%	30%	50%	35%	2	3	-1		
Encourage higher education and lifelong learning	49%	59%	31%	30%	4	4	0		
Create decent and secure job opportunities for people	60%	66%	50%	30%	3	5	-2		
Address literacy and numeracy issues in the general population	41%	64%	12%	30%	10	6	4		
Increase economic productivity through investments in R&D and training	39%	37%	19%	25%	6	7	-1		
Encourage employers to provide more and better training	36%	44%	19%	15%	7	8	-1		
Provide better supports to those who face barriers entering the labour market	24%	39%	15%	15%	9	9	0		
Encourage innovation and entrepreneurship	29%	35%	4%	10%	11	10	1		
Attract more immigrants with the job skills we need	15%	31%	19%	5%	8	11	-3		
Encourage older workers to continue working for several more years	0%	4%	0%	0%	12	12	0		
Do nothing - let the market forces naturally resolve the issue	3%	0%	0%	0%	13	13	0		
Number of respondents	35	27	26	20	N/A	N/A	N/A		





9. Final Comments

Participants in the New Brunswick dialogue emphasized that the issue of skills needs in the context of an aging workforce is a broad and complex one. As a result, they put great emphasis on the need for collaborative action. This, they felt, required three conditions:

- Planning and decision-making that is based on a shared understanding of the issues (hence the call for good, timely and accurate labour market information);
- Mechanisms to open more channels of communications and build new levels of trust amongst stakeholders;
- A focus on concrete solutions that take into account regional disparities within the province.

Participants pointed to the willingness of those in the room – and those who weren't there – to collaborate on these labour market issues. They expressed an interest in seeing continued communication and collaboration between business and labour and other stakeholders. Many appreciated the fact that the WPP had served as catalyst for this dialogue and wondered how to keep the momentum going in the absence of formal structures to enable the continuation of this type of dialogue.

Michel Boudreau, New Brunswick Labour representative of the WPP Atlantic Task Force, suggested that a follow-up meeting be held in the fall, to discuss the findings of this dialogue and to explore possible next steps.

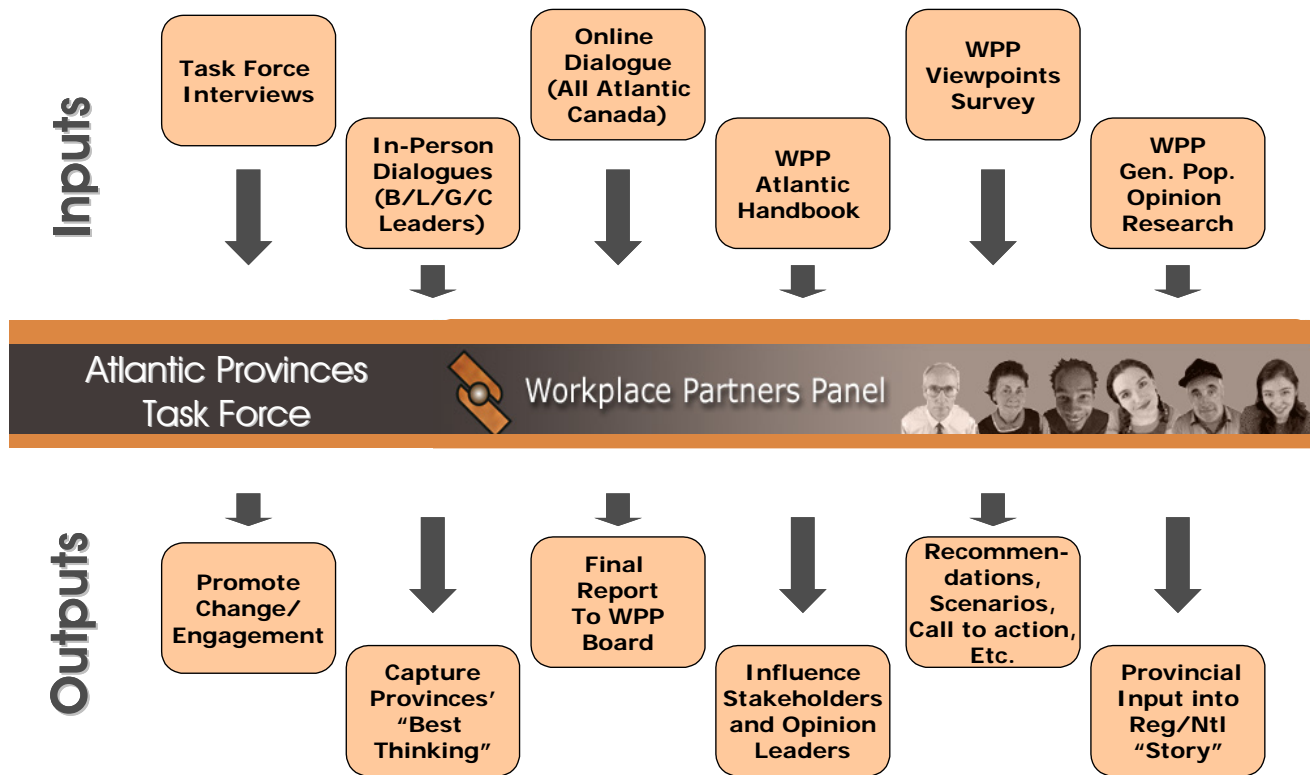




Appendix 1: APTF Inputs

The following diagram summarizes the key inputs into the APTF's deliberations, as well as some of its potential outputs:

APTF Inputs/Outputs



WPP Provincial Dialogues

One provincial deliberative dialogue was held in each of the four Atlantic provinces. The purpose of these deliberative dialogues was to:

- Engage business, labour, government and community leaders in an inclusive, reflective, values-based and transparent process;
- Enable a collective stocktaking of the issues, priorities, and action.

These were daylong facilitated dialogues with up to 50 participants, representing the province's business, labour, community and government voices. Participants were provided with a workbook that helped them reflect on the issue of skills needs in the context of an aging workforce.

This was accomplished through a mix of small group and plenary discussions. Participants were pre-assigned to one of three small groups (labelled Blue, Green, and Red), to ensure that each group included labour, business, community and government perspectives.

The morning conversation was dedicated to understanding the issue and identifying priorities, with a focus on exploring underlying values, differences, and common ground. The question used to focus the morning conversation was: ***What key topics and specific challenges are important to you and why?*** The afternoon conversation focused on action. In particular, participants explored what needs to be done, by whom and under what conditions. The question used to focus this part of the conversation was: ***What actions must be undertaken? By whom? Under what conditions?***

Participants were also asked to complete **pre- and post-dialogue questionnaires** on-site to assist in measuring shifts in their perspectives as a result of their participation in this event.

The **New-Brunswick deliberative dialogue** was held in Moncton, at the Hotel Delta Beauséjour, on April 25, 2006. It brought together 41 New Brunswickers, representing the perspectives of business (32%), labour (29%), the community (29%), and various levels of government (10%).

WPP Online Dialogue

The online process was designed to parallel the in-person deliberative dialogue. The objective of the online process was to ensure that all interested Atlantic Canadians had the opportunity to share their views and ideas on the issue of skills needs in the context of an aging workforce.

An online workbook allowed online participants to explore the issue by considering relevant information before answering questions. It also allowed them to identify priorities for action.

An online ideas-sharing process allowed participants to share their ideas and perspectives on what needs to be done to address the issue of skill needs in the context of an aging workforce.



WPP Atlantic Handbook

The *WPP Handbook: The Atlantic Provinces and Skills Shortages* provides a factual starting point to better understand skills needs in the context of an ageing population for the Atlantic region and is a fresh look at the demographic and labour market trends that will shape both the challenges and the possible solutions. This document has been produced as a supporting reference for the Atlantic Provinces Task Force – a project of the Workplace Partners Panel.

WPP Viewpoints Survey

In October, November and December 2005, the WPP surveyed 1,169 leaders from the business, labour and public sector (education, health, and government) communities to determine their perspectives on the critical human resource issues facing Canada's economy and labour market. The survey captures **managers' and labour leaders' views** on the actions seen to be most important in addressing current and future skills needs.

WPP General Population Survey

In February 2006, Viewpoints Research Ltd. was commissioned by the Workplace Partners Panel to conduct a survey of people living in the Atlantic region, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. The survey captures **general population views** from each of these provinces/regions, regarding their concerns about skills shortages and their perceptions of proposed solutions to mitigate these problems.





Appendix 2: Participants' Priorities

\$5 Prioritization Exercise: Detailed Summary

Topic	Challenge	Red		Blue		Green		Total Challenges		Total Topic	
		\$	Voices	\$	Voices	\$	Voices	\$	Voices	\$	Voices
Our workforce	Youth	\$5.50	4	\$5.25	6	\$12.00	9	\$22.75	19	48.75	41
	Immigrants	\$4.00	3	\$0.50	1	\$6.00	4	\$10.50	8		
	Unemployed / underemployed	\$3.50	3	\$1.00	1	\$9.00	7	\$13.50	11		
	Older workers	\$0.50	1	\$0.50	1	\$1.00	1	\$2.00	3		
Economic Development	Job creation	\$3.00	2	\$14.50	7	\$9.00	5	\$26.50	14	\$40.50	26
	Productivity	\$1.00	1	\$0.50	1	\$3.00	2	\$4.50	4		
	Innovation	\$7.00	5	\$0.50	1	\$2.00	2	\$9.50	8		
Education and training	B/L/G/E coordination	\$13.50	7	\$3.25 + \$4.50	5 + 3	\$17.00	12	\$38.25	27	\$96.25	65
	Workplace training and lifelong learning	\$21.00	12	\$1.00	1	\$11.00	9	\$33.00	22		
	Trades and technologies	\$16.50	8	\$3.50	4	\$5.00	4	\$25.00	16		
Other	Min of Labour NB (included in B/L/G/E coordination)*			\$4.50*	3			\$4.50	3	\$17.00	13
	Low birth rate/work and family policies			\$4.00	4			\$4.00	4		
	North/south – rural/urban			\$1.00	2	\$4.00	2	\$5.00	4		
	Language	\$3.50	2					\$3.50	2		
	Global context										

* Included in "B/L/G/E coordination" by Blue group





Appendix 3: Pre- /Post-dialogue Surveys

Methodological Considerations

There are several methodological considerations readers should keep in mind when considering the findings from the pre- and post-dialogue surveys. First, the findings reflect the responses of dialogue participants, who for the most part, were from the business, labour, education, and community services sectors. Their views are not necessarily representative of these communities, or of the general population.

Second, the findings for each province are based on small sample sizes. As a result, small percentage point differences (for example, in the percentage of respondents “agreeing” with a given issue) are actually reflecting differences between only one or two respondents.

Third, the number of participants answering the pre-dialogue questionnaire differed from the number answering the post-dialogue questionnaire. The comparison of pre- and post-dialogue findings must therefore be treated with caution. In those instances when the findings of the two surveys are different, it could be due to a “real” change in thinking among dialogue participants, or it could simply reflect a change in the nature of the group answering the pre- and post-surveys. In an attempt to address this limitation, additional analysis was carried out for the smaller group of respondents who answered both the pre- and post-dialogue questionnaires. The results of this analysis were used as an indicator of the validity of the findings presented in this report.

In short, these findings are generally consistent with those presented in this report, and suggest that the change in response between the pre- and post-dialogue reflected a “real” change in thinking and not an “artificial” change due to differences in the survey samples.





Appendix 4: Participants List

Belinda Allen

Labour Force Development Officer
Entreprise Saint John

Colleen Baxter

Director, Human Resources
J.D. Irving Limited

Michel Boudreau

President
New Brunswick Federation of Labour

Ervan Cronk

Administrative Vice-President - Atlantic Region
Communications, Energy and Paperworkers
Union of Canada

Dee Dee Daigle

Representative – Atlantic Region
Canadian Labour Congress

Lorne DeGaut

Sales Associate
Century 21 River Valley Real Estate Ltd.

Bonnie Doughty

Case Manager
Multicultural Association of Fredericton Inc.

Earl Garland

Vice-President, Atlantic Region
CAW Rail Division Local 100

Sandy Harding

Provincial Vice-President
CUPE 2745

Danny King

1st Vice-President
New Brunswick Federation of Labour

Lisa Bamford

Director of Newcomer Programs
The Multicultural Association of Fredericton
Inc.

Brian Beaton

Grand Lodge Representative
International Association of Machinists and
Aerospace Workers

Ivan Corbett

Executive Director
New Brunswick Advisory Council on Youth

John Cunningham

Executive Director
Adult Learning and Skills
NB Training and Employment Development

Lionel Dann

Human Resources Superintendent
PCS Potash

Bill Dixon

Executive Director
Moncton Northeast Construction Association

Raymond Gallant

Agent de développement stratégique
ACOA New Brunswick

Laurann Hanson

Director of Human Resources
City of Moncton

Lydia Jaillet

2nd Vice-President
The New Brunswick Union

Liette Laplante

Student Representative
New Brunswick Community College



DRAFT

Raymond Léger

Research Representative
Canadian Union of Public Employees

Heather MacLean

Coordinator of Projects and Policy
Atlantic Provinces Trucking Association

Jim McIntyre

Human Resource Director – ITS Corporate
J.D. Irving, Limited

Cheryl McLaughlin-Basque

Guidance Counsellor - Student Services
Community College of New Brunswick
Dieppe Campus

Rob Mullaly

Strategic Services
Service Canada

Aline Munro

Dean
New Brunswick Community College

Johanne Perron

Coordinator
Coalition for Pay Equity

Allison Porter

President
NB 4-H Council Ltd. - APANB Organization

Mark Robar

Business Agent
Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and
Grain Millers, Local 406

Valerie Roy

Chief Executive Officer
The Greater Moncton Chamber of Commerce

Darren Zwicker

Director, Recruitment
Human Resources
J.D. Irving, Limited

Lise Levesque

PSAC Table 1 Bargaining Team Member
NB SEIC

Peter H. McGill

Principal
New Brunswick Community College

Patrick McLaughlin

Director, Organizational Development /
Recruitment
J.D. Irving Limited

Max Michaud

Vice-President Atlantic Region
Communications, Energy and Paperworkers
Union of Canada

H. Douglas J. Mullin

SRC President
New Brunswick Community College

Paul O'Driscoll

Chair
The Greater Moncton Chamber of Commerce

David Plante

Vice-President
Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters
New Brunswick Division

Linda Porter

Contact Person
NB 4-H Council Ltd. - APANB Organization

Kristina Rogers

AHRDA Manager
New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council

Andrew L. Steeves

Vice-President
ADI Group Inc.





Appendix 5: WPP Atlantic Task Force

The WPP Atlantic Task Force is comprised of 8 senior Labour and Business leaders representing each of the four Atlantic Provinces.

The mandate of the Atlantic Task Force was to:

- Help identify and articulate provincial and regional “Best Thinking” on the issue of skills needs in the context of an aging workforce;
- Seek out multiple perspectives to inform its work and ensure that its conclusions are grounded in provincial realities;
- Demonstrate, through its leadership, the power of dialogue and collaboration between Business and Labour;
- Be the “face of the WPP” (e.g., by hosting the provincial dialogues and presenting a report of its findings to the national WPP board).

Reg Anstey

President, N.L. Federation of Labour

Colleen Baxter

Director Human Resources, J.D. Irving Ltd (N.B.)

Michel Boudreau

President, N.B. Federation of Labour

Rick Clarke

President, N.S. Federation of Labour

Clarence Dwyer

V.P. Corporate Affairs, Rutter, Inc. (N.L.)

Ed Lawlor

President, DeltaWare Systems, Inc. (P.E.I.)

Liz MacDonald

Emera, Inc. – Retired (N.S.)

Carl Pursey

President, P.E.I. Federation of Labour

