

**CSCSC LMI Project**

**Briefing Notes on Background Research  
on LMI in other Sector Councils**

**Prepared for the CSCSC LMI Committee**

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# 1. Introduction, Objective, Method

Background research was a key component of the project startup and focused on a meeting held on February 7th, 2007 in Ottawa.

**1.1 Purpose of the February 7th Meeting in Ottawa:** CSCSC hosted a breakfast meeting with ten Sector Councils on February 7th, 2007. The goal of the meeting was to see what lessons learned by other established Sector Councils might aid CSCSC's LMI project.

The meeting focused on key questions such as: are there lessons learned on the type of LMI initiatives that existing councils have learned that can aid CSCSC's priority building (most successful LMI practices), indications of which efforts have produced the greatest results? Are new approaches being developed and are there certain approaches that may not work? What are the best ways to involve constituencies? What are the best ways to provide information exchanges with existing SCs, particularly where cross-sectoral issues are involved? How should CSCSC keep SC peers up-to-date?

Sector Council representatives shared information regarding various aspects of their LMI initiatives and highlighted main lessons learned. A number of topics were not pursued in detail during the meeting because of the large participation turnout, however they were addressed in follow-up interviews with the Sector Council representatives.

**1.2 Purpose of the Follow-up Interviews with Sector Councils:** Several interviews were conducted with participants over the next few weeks. The goal of the interviews was to obtain more specific and detailed examples about LMI initiatives and lessons learned. A number of broad lessons also emerged from the follow-up interviews.

**1.3 Limitations:** The main limitation faced by the background research was that Sector Councils focused on many topics which would not likely benefit CSCSC, such as economic modeling. Broad lessons, reoccurring initiatives, challenges, strategies and trends emerged. However, specific learnings from each Sector Council were limited. Generally, process LMI lessons emerged from the meeting and interviews rather than specific examples. Another obstacle faced by the background research was the limited number of follow-up interviews with Sector Council representatives. Due to time constraints and busy schedules, only three follow-up interviews were conducted and as a result, some detailed information was not received at the time of writing this report.

## 2. LMI Initiatives/Lessons Reported by the Sector Councils

The following section highlights some of the main LMI initiatives or lessons reported by the Sector Councils at the February 7th meeting in Ottawa and the follow-up interviews with the Sector Council representatives.

**2.1 Canadian Printing Industries Sector Council:** Their first LMI initiative was the development of a three year framework to identify the essential building blocks for developing LMI practices such as implementing training programs and developing skills standards. A challenge for the industry is that most available information is out of date or not comparable. The kind of information that is available comes from Statégis and Statistics Canada however most of the NOCS codes and other data are significantly out of date and incomplete. In order to overcome this challenge, the SC has started to work with the printing industry in the United States to develop a common survey to gather the necessary and updated information the industry requires. In addition to the development of a survey, the sector is also updating and developing their contact lists of memberships, associations and affiliations with the assistance of the industry suppliers.

**2.2 Canadian Council of Professional Engineers:** The CCPE is currently conducting an LMI study in collaboration with the Canadian Council of Technicians and Technologists. The study addresses LMI issues, in particular, supply and demand, globalization, employer attitudes and workplace boundaries. CCPE has found that sharing information with constituencies is a critical step in the process to involve key stakeholders, and that feedback is critical to ensure their sustained involvement. CCPE has established a process in order to keep key constituencies and stakeholders involved. This process ensures that everyone with an interest in the sector is provided with the same information and that there is follow-up with routine and monthly updates.

**2.3 Information and Communications Technology Council:** This council has established various effective LMI initiatives including career awareness within the schools, professional development activities, information about international education and how to retain skills in Canada, and an initiative termed "LM Intelligence". This initiative estimates future trends within the sector and tries to understand the barriers that exist within the sector by looking at supply drivers and what the future of the industry will look like in the next five year period. Industry forecasting has overall been seen as an effective LMI initiative. General lessons learned as suggested by ICTC included not making sector studies too academic. The Sector Council has found that studies that are less academic are more effective. Another lesson noted was the importance of maintaining open communications with key industry stakeholders therefore it is critical for the Sector Council to understand the wants and needs of the key stakeholders. This SC was able to engage key stakeholders was by offering incentives in the form of free membership. The scope and diversity of the industry was seen as reflecting the importance of involving all regions across the country.

**2.4 Canadian Food Industry Council:** The main LMI initiative that the CFIC has undertaken was a sector study aimed at understanding and addressing the issues key stakeholders within the industry have identified. One key challenge with this study for the Sector Council was that there was very little common ground between occupations within the industry, for example between cashiers versus client representatives. Similar to the experience of many other Sector Councils, NOCs were not deemed a valuable data source because they were not comparable. Therefore greater clarification of terms was required in order to make comparisons within the industry and between occupations and various industry partners possible. Future initiatives to overcome this challenge include standardizing occupation definitions.

**2.5 Plastics Sector Council:** A current LMI initiative is launching a certification project. CPSC also has recognized the importance of open and ongoing communications between the council and the key stakeholders. In order for the council to maintain an effective relationship, a report about the project was provided to all key stakeholders, which was made available on their website. The study also demonstrated the importance of tailoring the survey and or the interview method to accommodate the nature of the respondents. For example, initially, the study included conducting email surveys however there was a very low response rate. They then switched to telephone surveys and received a much higher response rate, and local representation in each province.

**2.6 Construction Sector Council:** This SC has done a wide variety of LMI studies over many years (The industry has done LMI studies for 14-15 years). Now that the construction SC is in place the council has developed a regional network of LMI committees which are key to successful forecasting. The regional network of LMI committees brings provincial and regional realities to the forecast. As well, regional groups have been useful for the SC in terms of forecasting industry needs, regionally by province. The importance of regional representation is seen as critical for the development of good LMI in such a large and changing industry. Provincial and regional forecasts are based on macro-economic assessments, and on regional network input. The construction Sector Council, throughout its many projects, recognizes the importance of regional networks and provincial forecasts.

**2.7 Electricity Sector Council:** A key lesson learned as reported by the Electricity Sector Council is the value of clear communications and the importance of LMI to stakeholder messaging. LMI is crucial to the ability of the industry to influence regulatory processes to obtain the funding needed to ensure human resources support. The availability and comparability of data is also a key challenge for the Electricity Sector Council given that the industry has only a few players in some provinces. Statistics Canada data cannot be broken down provincially and this is a challenge for many of the Sector Councils. As a strategy to overcome this challenge, the sector has received funding to conduct a three year primary data collection project to obtain current industry specific information. Because the Electricity Sector Council is provincially regulated, it recognizes the importance of addressing provincial/regional networks and is in the process of establishing regional/provincial networks. It is important to note that HRSDC does not fund those networks and they must be funded through core infrastructure. The networks are not specific only to the LMI project but are intended to inform all of the Council's work. In addition to establishing regional networks, communicating and connecting with the technical expertise is also seen as critical in order to produce a successful study. Collaboration is seen as key for sector council success.

**2.8 Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council:** Current LMI initiatives for the Trucking Sector Council include developing skills standards for drivers, a training schools certification program as well as a training program for dispatchers. One current council initiative is the Canada Driving Force survey. The first phase of the study addresses HR issues in the industry such as supply and demand. The second phase of the study will look at the issue of retention and whether training has improved. The sector feels that there is a need for an industry HR guide that is simple enough for the industry to understand. The lesson suggested by the sector is the need for simple and comprehensive documents rather than complex academic language that is difficult for the key stakeholders to understand. Like many other sector councils, CTHRC has a current project that is based on econometric forecast models that are designed to project the growth within the trucking industry. CTHRC has developed an econometric forecast model designed to project the need for additional truck drivers due to projected industry growth.

**2.9 Petroleum Human Resources Council of Canada:** LMI initiatives included a sector study, including a ten year demand forecast, which attempted to collect demand through surveys. The Sector Council found that the use of surveys was particularly difficult. Because this is a highly regional sector, the sector emphasizes collecting their own data in order to obtain regionally specific indicators.

**2.10 Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council:** Many of the lessons learned from the Tourism Human Resource Council are also prevalent in the other Sector Councils, particularly the value of the regional structure of the SC which demonstrates the importance of collaboration and provincial and regional networks. A challenge for CTHRC is obtaining reliable and up to date data from Statistics Canada. To overcome this challenge, CTHRC has used benchmark data which is produced annually (Total tourism employment data). Additionally, the SC is also currently moving towards more forecasting of demand. CTHRC involves key stakeholders and constituents by providing them with regular reports, which are intended to inform everyone, about all LMI programs and policy initiatives.

### **3. Learnings: Importance of the Information**

**3.1 Overview:** The above findings suggest several broad process lessons the CSCSC might use in building an effective labour market information (LMI) system. These lessons and specific approaches provide a series of strategies used by other sector councils that the CSCSC can adapt to meet their own industry and HR needs.

**3.2 Some Specific Lessons** CSCSC should consider include, the importance of communicating with key stakeholders and constituents through various methods such as web-based reports or providing free memberships as incentives for participation. The importance of provincial and regional networking is another key lesson learned, which is critical to Sector Councils' success in meeting goals and objectives. Sector Councils, it is suggested, need to think in a cross-sectoral and macro perspective and work on and develop common perspectives within and across sectors. CSCSC, in particular, needs to be aware of issues with developing cross-sectoral LMI strategies because supply chain is involved in various sectors and industries. Recognizing and being able to identify barriers to effective HR programs which deal with key issues (such as retirements), using simple and plain communication strategies, and increasing collaboration with other Sector Councils are important.

The best LMI initiatives take time and develop with the growth and establishment of the Sector Council; things do not happen overnight! Working with the industry, finding out what the industry wants and keeping the industry involved in the SC's work provides relevance to LMI efforts. The SC will learn the best approaches as it grows and learns from experience in the industry.

Collaboration is critical to a successful LMI system. Single efforts rarely stand out as the key best approach to a successful LMI system. Rather, it is the combination of all the SC's initiatives together that create the best systems.

Personal approaches and work are key to producing the greatest results. Personal contacts and visits are effective approaches to gain open communications, high participation rates and buy-in with most industries.

Workshops involving key stakeholders are an effective approach, which allows stakeholders to "see" the issues and how they fit into the larger industry concerns. Workshops are also a good approach to keep key industry personnel involved and up to date with the industry issues.

The worst approaches generally are unilateral approaches that do not involve key stakeholders.

A successful LMI system is truly only effective if people actually know how to use the LMI therefore it is important to teach people how to use the LMI tools.

**3.3 Current developments and initiatives:** Web-based approaches are becoming more prominent in LMI systems as a mean of communicating and promoting awareness and interest among key stakeholder and industry members.

**3.4 Information Tracking:** Rarely do formal information tracking mechanisms exist for LMI (how it is used) however, there is a greater effort being made to keep track of such requests today. Many requests for information are generated through regular meetings and typical information requests include details about investments within the industry, provincial breakdowns, breakdowns by business line and forecasts.

**3.5 Stakeholder Involvement:** SCs noted that the most effective approaches to involve stakeholders in the development of LMI is through the establishment of steering committees from the very beginning in the process. The steering committee needs to include people who will directly use the LMI data, for example, middle managers and HR professionals. (It is also critical to keep larger firms involved because the smaller firms tend not to participate, as well as labour organizations and educational institutions).

## **4. Conclusions**

The process lessons learned from the background research are relevant to the process of creating an effective LMI system for CSCSC.

An effective LMI system that addresses all of the supply chain sector will need time to develop and will evolve as the Sector Council becomes established. Communicating with all key stakeholders is critical, whether it is in the format of meetings, informational updates, web-based announcements or personal contacts.